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PlayStation®2

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ISSUE 27 MAY 2004
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DERWENT HOWARD

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When you *kill* for *money*
there are **no rules**.

The Psychology of the Assassin

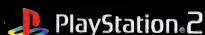
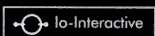


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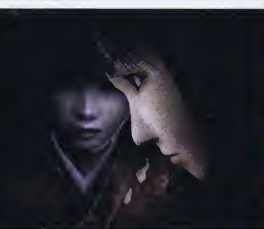
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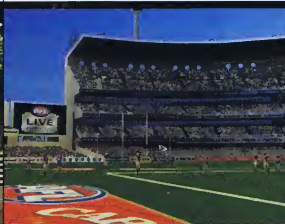
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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY



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WRITE TO
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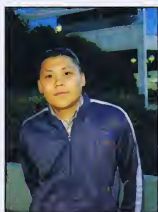
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"... we knew
that
Transformers
had the
potential to
change the
face of the
Australian
development
scene"

EDITOR'S LETTER

Transformers. Robots in disguise! The OPS2 team are, largely, children of the '80s and we fondly remember epic Autobots Vs Decepticon battles being played out on our tellys. And just like kids today who are currently enjoying the "new generation" of Transformers Armada, we've had our fingers crossed that someone, somewhere, would take the plunge and develop a decent Transformers game.

Well, someone *did* decide to finally make Transformers, and significantly it was none other than Atari Melbourne House - Australia's premier games studio. Despite the fact that Australian-made games have never held the same critical acclaim as some of their foreign counterparts (anyone play *South Park Rally*?), OPS2 has always championed the local cause.

Now, Transformers is a game that we can all be truly proud of. The game is brilliant, world class and should prove to be a blockbuster. It oozes quality and is impressive in all the key areas: visuals, gameplay and audio, and has exceeded even our high expectations. Australian games developers now have a new standard to aim for.

Months ago, when we played the game for the very first time we were pleasantly excited to see that the game had all the main elements there. At that point, we knew that Transformers had the potential to change the face of the Australian development scene and that it wasn't a cheap cash-in that someone had decided to release just so they had something to plaster the Transformers logo on. We were a tad hesitant because we've seen promising games sink when crunch time rolled around. Not so here.

Transformers has arrived. And with it, so has the local games development scene. Transformers fans will love it. Anyone with even a passing interest in the local scene will love it. And anyone who loves action adventure games will love it. Transformers is a winner!

R Young

RICHE YOUNG
Editor

AUTOBOTS OR DECEPTICONS?



NARAYAN PATTISON
"Autobots. My Ford Laser is the crappiest car ever, so I still daydream that I'm driving Sideswipe around. Besides, all the Decepticons had annoying voices - remember Starscream?"



TRISTAN OGILVIE
"Autobots. Optimus has to be the kindest and most sincere talking truck in the world. He has warmth, but he's hard at the same time. And I really respect that."



MICHAEL DEVRIES
"Decepticons. I just love the way they just wanna smash the place up, blow up cars and trucks and how they have that real punk attitude. They remind me of my mates in Wagga."



LUKE REILLY
"Decepticons. They're way more believable than those stupid Autobots. I mean, come on - talking cars that can transform? Please! Give me a break. I'll take Megatron any day."



MICHELLE STARR
"It has to be Decepticons! They're way cooler and more hardcore. I don't like prissy guys who are basically just do-gooders. Yawn! If I drink coffee, I need some caffeine. Autobots are BORING."



ED LOMAS
"Autobots definitely. I got my tattoo of Bumblebee in '89 and I stand by it. No matter how old I am I'll always be a bigger fan of the Autobots. The same goes for my ongoing passion for Warrant."



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VIOLENCE & MEDIUM LEVEL
COARSE LANGUAGE

MIDWAY

"In short,
The Suffering is a great game,
not just a great horror game"
- IGN

THE SUFFERING

LOCK-UP
THE FEAR...

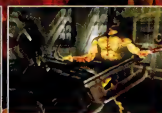
...RELEASE THE RAGE
THIS MAY

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PlayStation 2



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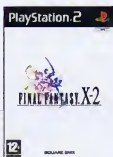
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on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS

FINAL FANTASY X-2



DISTRIBUTOR: EA
GAME TYPE: RPG
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

The direct sequel to the amazing *Final Fantasy X*, and it's just as action packed and huge as the series always is. Our demo lets you try out two separate missions from opposite ends of the game, to give you an idea of the kind of spectacular graphics, light-hearted storyline and epic battles you'll work through in the full game. The first mission sees you racing up a huge tower to battle a giant crab called Boris (no joke!), while the second sees the girls infiltrating a huge mechanical base filled with robots. Their weapons are all hugely powered up by this stage – and you'll soon find out why they need to be...!



FIREFIGHTER F.D.18



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: APRIL
PLAYERS: 1

Real heroes don't collect gems – they go into burning buildings and save people! Experience the rush in *Firefighter F.D. 18*, as you put out fires, dodge explosions and rescue trapped civilians. Our demo gives you a whole level of flaming terror to put out.



BROKEN SWORD: SLEEPING DRAGON



DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

'Point and click' adventure games used to be popular, but with *Broken Sword*, they've evolved. See how well the new control system works with our playable demo of the game's opening section.



KYA: DARK LINEAGE



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

Kya's lost in a strange world full of little furry fellas being oppressed by other furry fellas, and it's up to you to help her help them. Try out our level and get to the bottom of it for yourself!



FORBIDDEN SIREN



DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: SURVIVAL HORROR
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

Rather than running around blasting zombies, here you can tap in to their brains and see what they see – which is doubly scary when you discover that they're looking straight at you! Our demo has three stages to creep around – go for it and stand your ground!



Hey there. Welcome to OPS2! We've got another DVD packed to the edges with demos this month, with *Final Fantasy X-2* being probably the biggest name on there. Quickly run through our two special missions and you'll discover why everyone's been having so much fun with the series recently – if you've got even the smallest adventuring bone in your body, you really need to join in on this one!

Also, all you horror freaks need to check out *Forbidden Siren*. Our three-stage demo is designed to give you a feel for the unique 'sightjacking' feature, which manages to add an original and extremely creepy edge to the game. But enough of my yakkyn' – just crank the disc up and get browsing yourself. Enjoy, amigosi!

Ed Lomas

ED LOMAS
Associate Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **ⓧ** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* brings you something no other magazine can – playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you to try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From *GT3* and *MGS2* to *TimeSplitters 2* and *Final Fantasy X*, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the newsagent's shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

Demo Disc Returns

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OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH PS2 LETS YOU PLAY



DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**
GAME TYPE: **SHOOTER**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
(1-16 ONLINE)

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

Finally! With a couple of false starts, we've finally brought you this highly anticipated demo. Sony's outstanding tactical shooter simulates all the best bits of stealthy combat – namely crawling through muddy puddles and shooting people in the head! Our playable demo lets you do this all the way through one stage of the game, commanding your elite squad through loads of mud and loads of rounds of ammunition.



DISTRIBUTOR: **EA**
GAME TYPE: **RACING**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1** (FULL
GAME 1-4)

R: RACING

Namco's evolution of the classic Ridge Racer series sees it blending its classic arcade-style gameplay with real circuits and detailed car tuning options. Our demo gives you the chance to race two laps around Monaco's legendary street circuit, or blast your way through one rally stage. If you want to check out the rallying, make sure you change your car selection to the Peugeot first. This is as ambitious move for the series, so see if you like it for yourself!



DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**
GAME TYPE: **SPORTS**
OUT: **MAY**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
(ONLINE 1-8)

THIS IS SOCCER 2004

While you may well already be loyal to either the FIFA or Pro Evolution Soccer series of games, Sony's own soccer title has been improving steadily over the years. We reckon you should give the youngster a try-out and see what he's capable of! Our demo lets you play as either England or Brazil and play one five-minute half of a match. Go Ronaldo!



REEL FOOTAGE

Not only do we have the **ONLY** playable PS2 demos – we've got all the best rolling ones too!



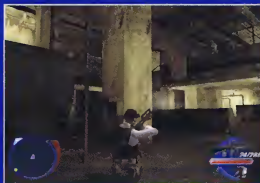
DRIV3R

W3 know you'r3 gagging for this on3, so h3r3's a n3w trail3r showing som3 of th3 r3nd3rd s3qu3nc3s, as w3ll as som3 blinding 3xplosions. Y3ahl!



SOCOM II

Once you've finished the playable mission elsewhere on the DVD, give this trailer a squiz and see what kind of other locales you'll be sent to in the full game.



SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN

This neat trailer charts the development of the Siphon Filter series from its PSone beginnings to the awesome-looking Omega Strain on PS2.



TRANSFORMERS

This month's Australian-developed cover game in high-speed, robotic balls-out blasting-racing-changing-jumping-smashing action! Read our review and be sure to check out the footage before buying up!

REVIEW
ON
PS4!

REVIEW
ON
PS3!

DOWNLOADER

Cheating's okay sometimes. Like those times when you're showering and the loo's just a bit too far away...

RATCHET & CLANK

Never been able to finish this robotic adventure and want to see what the rest of the game's about? Bung on save onto your Card and all the game's areas will be open.

THE GETAWAY

Gettin' greef off ya mates fer not bein' able ta get froo duh Getaway? Daaniaad our nifty I/I file fing an' the 'ole game'll be complete an' open. Awight, geezah? Saw-td!

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

This save is awesome – it gives you every item from the PES shop... for free! No matter having to conquer Master League!

ONIMUSHA 2

It can get a bit tiresome having to kill demon ninjas all day. Save your fingers some work!

BURNOUT 2

This save will give you all the cheats and cars if you haven't unlocked this baby already.

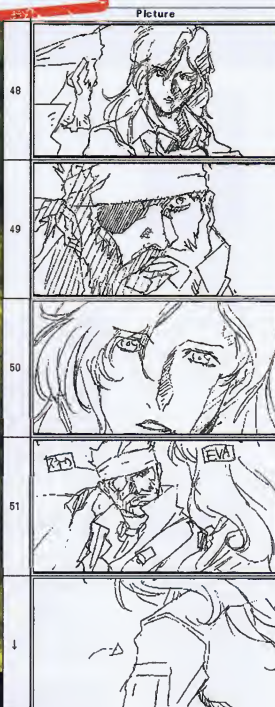
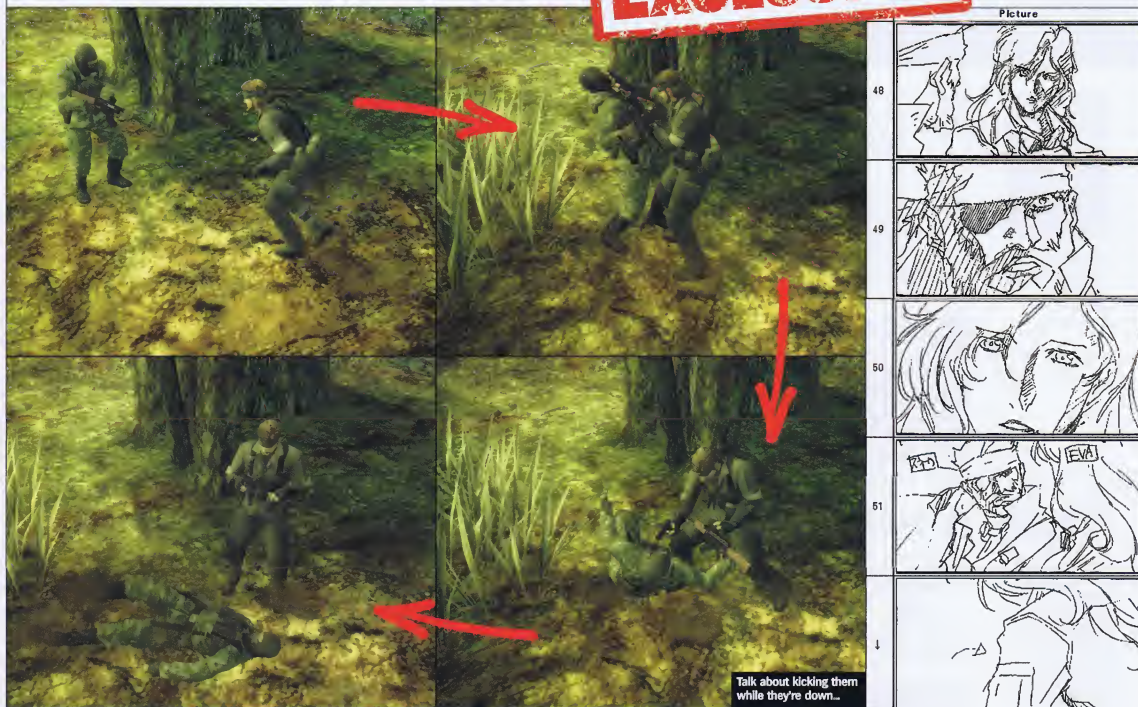
TIGER WOODS PGA 2004

A great save – it'll give you a player with max stats, so there's no more blaming your clubs.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

A bit low on bling, eh? This save will load you up with cars, cash and unlocked features.

EXCLUSIVE



NOW YOU SEE HIM...

It looks like you can teach an old snake new tricks



Our spies have been seriously working on their interrogation methods and after much snooping around and the occasional telephone book beating they've returned with some fresh information about Hideo Kojima's guaranteed epic *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*.

With *Snake Eater* sure to attract a bigger crowd at the upcoming E3 trade

show than a Kate Hudson kissing booth, we've found out that the developers have implemented an innovative new feature that they're calling a 'Camouflage Index' system.

Snake may be the king of stealth, but to be brutally honest his past efforts mainly involve hiding behind the occasional wall and skulking around with a cardboard box on his head. Taking Snake out of the military bases and enclosed environments of previous *Metal Gear* games and dropping him deep into the jungle has opened up a wealth of new stealth opportunities.

The 'Camouflage Index' is displayed as a percentage while you play, and it will rely on three different criteria. Snake's fatigues, face-paint and posture each directly affect his ability to disappear into his surroundings. We've been told that with a 'Camouflage Index' of 100%, enemy soldiers could pass

within inches of our silent hero without so much as a second glance.

Apparently players will need to switch between a variety of different outfits in order to match the environment. Snake's ability to melt into the jungle backdrop should prove very handy when hunting for food to keep his stamina up, indicating that the 'Camouflage Index' is much more than a cheap attempt at a new feature.

What's more is that MGS aficionados will again have the chance to become involved in the series. Just as some lucky fans had the opportunity to appear on the dog tags worn by the soldiers in *MGS2*, we've found out a new plan will be launched at E3. Players from all over the world will be invited to contribute costume designs for inclusion in the game. Winners will be selected personally by Kojima, so break out the crayons and start drawing! **LR**



The programmers capture their animation the hard way



NEW GAME INFO

ALL EYES ON HARRY

Harry Potter's next adventure to use the magical EyeToy

EA has announced that the next instalment of *Harry Potter* will be the first third-party game to make use of the EyeToy.

Prisoner of Azkaban will be the third adventure for the young wizard, assuming we regard *Quidditch World Cup* as a bit of a diversion. For the first time players will also be able to play as Harry's friends Ron and Hermione.

The EyeToy will bring an entirely new experience to the mini-games.

Up to four players can compete in a variety of *Harry Potter*-themed games, which include exploding snap, seeker practice and catching chocolate frogs. Mmmmm... chocolate.

The game and movie are both due in June. **LR**



MOVIE MURMURS

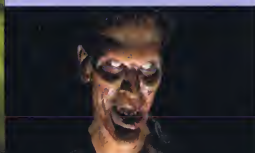
The latest news and rumours in the world of film and DVD



● **REAL MADRID'S DAVID BECKHAM** is reportedly in negotiations to feature in MGM's next *Pink Panther* movie. If the rumours are true, Mr Posh Spice himself will cameo as a footballer. The film will star Steve Martin, Beyonce Knowles, Kevin Kline and Jean Reno, and it should be out in 2005. But a footballer playing a footballer? Sounds like a stretch.



● **TALK ABOUT ORGANISED** - *Spider-Man II* hasn't even hit cinemas and not only has a third instalment been approved, it already has a release date. Vice-chairman of Sony studios recently announced *Spider-Man III* is scheduled for release May 4, 2007. Is it any wonder Stan Lee sleeps on a bed filled with money?



Why are they called the 'Evil Dead'? He looks like a nice bloke to us

● **RUMOURS THAT NEW LINE** is sitting on a pitch for *Freddy Vs Jason Vs Ash* may be true. In a recent interview, Bruce 'Evil Dead' Campbell did not commit to saying 'no' when asked about the project. Groovy.

● **AUSTRALIAN SCREENWRITER STUART BEATTIE** has been hired to rewrite the fourth *Indiana Jones* movie. Lucasfilm hired him after the success of another project he penned, *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

● **THE TENACIOUS JACK BLACK** will be squaring up against King Kong in Peter Jackson's upcoming remake of the classic.

NEW GAMES

THE SPICE OF LIFE

Capcom unveils its most diverse line-up yet

What do gladiators, serial killers, dinosaurs, samurais and Tim Burton have in common? We have absolutely no idea but Capcom's sure come up with some interesting new games based on them.

First out of the gate is the not so surprising, but still spectacular looking, *Onimusha 3*. In a bid to make the series more appealing to western gamers, French actor Jean Reno has been digitised as one of the playable characters and several of the levels are based in Paris. Fans of the originals shouldn't worry though, because there's still more than enough clanging metal and soul stealing in there.

Brad Pitt may have thought he had it tough with his 'Seven Deadly Sins' serial killer but how do you catch a group of seven different serial killers working as a team? By grabbing a really big gun and splattering a lot of blood about the place, from the look of *Killer 7*. Like *XIII*, *Killer 7* sports hyper-stylised Japanese anime graphics.

We weren't quite sure what to make

of the next one. *Monster Hunter* is a *Baldur's Gate*-style adventure game, only with tyrannosaurus rex and raptors roaming around rather than rats in cellars. After each hunting trip you still get to head back to the villages and sell their hides and teeth to buy better armour and weapons, and there's even an online mode in there. Crazy.

Playing a bit like *Metal Gear Solid* meets *Gladiator*, *Shadow of Rome* sees you fighting in the Colosseum, sneaking about palaces and even getting into the odd chariot race. Most surprisingly, Russell Crowe's anti-gladiator rant from the movie even gets a look-in.

Snagging the award for the most bizarre license ever is Capcom's videogame adaptation of Tim Burton's goth flick, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. All we saw of the game was a brief video of Jack Skellington opening up a can of whoop-ass with an axe and a homemade pumpkin flamethrower, but it does at least look faithful to the film. Expect to see a lot more on these games after E3. **LR NP**





STARR REPORT

Slow Games Day

As you may or may not have guessed by now, I'm something of a *Final Fantasy* whore, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. I'm also a big fan of the MMORPG... so you can probably guess my glee upon hearing rumours of the combination of the two in FFXI. And then, of course, the dismay upon hearing that there are no plans to release it here.

I don't know about you guys, but to me it feels a bit like we're the second-class citizens of the gaming world, with Japan and America getting all the good stuff almost before we even get wind of its development. Yeah, I know – the NTSC to PAL conversion takes a bit of time, but wouldn't it be grand if more games were made PAL in the first place?

I guess for most stuff it doesn't really matter in the grand scheme of things. But now we have a whole new problem to contend with: Network Gaming.

Ohhh, believe me, I think networking consoles is the bee's pyjamas. Meeting new people, testing your skills against new people, fragging said new people to bits. What's not to like?

Well, say you get a new game, and you load it up for some tasty network play, and then some bastard in the States who's had the game for six months already and knows it inside out wipes the floor with your arse. Call that equal footing? Hell, no! Luckily, the industry is booming, and perhaps over the next few years, we'll see our loyalty rewarded with some top games coming here to us first – then it'll be someone else's turn to whine about the horrid unfairness of it all.

MICHELLE STARR
Games Writer

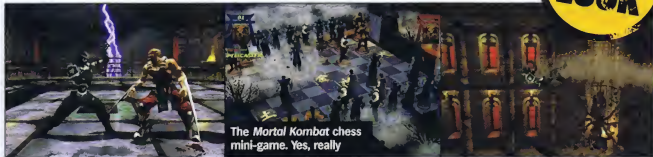
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BEAT IT

BLOOD BATH

New gameplay features to make *Mortal Kombat: Deception* the sickest yet

FIRST LOOK



The *Mortal Kombat* chess mini-game. Yes, really

Not only is the next instalment of *Mortal Kombat* set to be the best yet, it's also set to be the most bloodthirsty beat 'em up ever to claw its way onto PS2.

The standout feature of *Mortal Kombat: Deception* is a new kind of fatality. Each fighter will have two unique fatalities – for the uninitiated, a *Kombat 'fatality'* is a finishing move that

can be triggered at the end of a bout that is so violent it would render you unrecognisable to even your closest relatives. However, in addition to these fatalities each fighter will have their own unique hari-kiri move. Manage to trigger your own suicide before your opponent manages to do their fatality and you'll rob them the satisfaction of finishing you off. The hari-kiri

moves will be typically bloody.

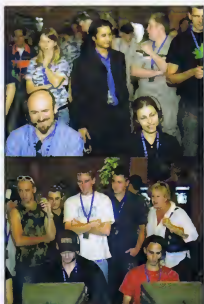
But that's not all, because the actual fighting arenas themselves will include fatality zones that you can use to dispatch your opponent. Show some love by tenderising your foe in a meat grinder...

The new MK will also feature destructible environments, tiered arenas, a deeper Konquest mode and a host of extras. **LR**

GAME ON!

BACK IN ACTION

Expert SEALs battle it out at *SOCOM II* launch



A number of online *SOCOM* veterans were chosen to attend the exclusive Australian launch party for *SOCOM II*.

Following a brief speech by Sony staff, the motley group was divided into four teams to test their mettle in the lush new environments of the latest instalment. In a secluded room that bore a close resemblance to an underground bunker, 16 PlayStation 2s were networked together for maximum camaraderie, and the battle was soon

underway. SEALs and terrorists alike fell even faster than the plentiful drinks and canapés. Even when compared to thermal scopes and 12-gauge shotguns, the most popular new feature with the *SOCOM* experts was definitely the ability to bust out a victory dance over their fallen foes. Nothing quite humiliates as much as the Macarena! Although everyone walked away with a *SOCOM II* game/headset bundle, big ups go to the Yellow Team for having the skills to come out on top – nice work guys! **LR**



Some of the veterans even brought army uniforms

INFO NUDGE



A FRACTION TOO MUCH FICTION

Spy Fiction is an upcoming stealth-action game with a few differences. Players control two characters, Bishop and Sheila from the SEA Phantom Strike team, who must unravel a mysterious terrorist plot threatening the world's governments with biotech weaponry. Apparently *Spy Fiction* will introduce a few new features to the stealth genre, such as a Predator-style optical camouflage suit and the ability to disguise yourself as any character in the game. Cross-dressers rejoice!

BOMB FOREIGN MEN

After completing an online beta test, Hudson Soft has at last released *Net Bomberman*, an online version of its explosive classic in Japan. The game is online only, and allows a huge eight players to simultaneously blast away at each other and themselves, supposedly making the action even more frantic than before. Apparently Hudson Soft will be offering downloads for the game to the PS2 hard drive. Yes, that same hard drive that we don't have yet. Sigh... The recent arrival of *Bomberman Kart* means that we'll likely see a local release.

NEVERSOFT

NEVER SAY NEVERSOFT

Neversoft, the hot-shot developer behind the *Immortal Tony Hawk Pro Skater* series has announced that it is keen to create some new titles. The follow up to *Tony Hawk's Underground* is assured, but *Underground* will apparently be also releasing its first non-skateboarding title since 2000's *Spider-Man* on the PSone, sometime in 2005. Considering how successful the company was with *Spider-Man* we can only expect good things from the mystery project. The development team is set to grow in numbers to accommodate the increase in productivity, but you can expect there'll still be plenty of oiling over the Neversoft office photocopier regardless.

ONE, TWO, THREE, FORE!

Get ready to return to the fairways, Sony is resurrecting its popular *Hot Shots Golf* franchise for a fourth instalment – and this time it's online. *Hot Shots Golf Fore!* will feature 34 playable golfers and 15 courses, five of which are returning from *Hot Shots Golf 3*. Two of the new courses will be mini-golf courses. Online you'll be able to participate in real-time tournaments for up to 20 players on the one course, although by the time development is finished Sony aims to have that number up around the 30 mark. We'll have more information before the game is released late 2004. Tiger better keep an eye out for this one.

"A BLISTERING AND BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED INDIANA JONES-STYLE MOVIE."

Todd Gilchrist, filmstew.com



GET READY TO RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

From the producer of **THE SCORPION KING** and **AIR FORCE ONE** comes the international Box Office hit **WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE**, now on DVD! This modern day **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** is "a great action ride that's funnier than most pure comedies." *Richard Roeper, RBPB & ROEPER*

- Starring **THE ROCK** (THE MUMMY RETURNS) as you've never seen him before, **AMERICAN PIE**'s **SEANN WILLIAM SCOTT**, **ROSARIO DAWSON** (25TH HOUR) and the legendary **CHRISTOPHER WALKEN** (PULP FICTION).
- This **COLLECTOR'S EDITION DVD** contains over **5 HOURS OF EXTRAS** including: 2 audio commentaries featuring The Rock, the director and the producers, never-before-seen deleted scenes, a behind-the-scenes feature on the making of the movie's stunts and fight scenes, 8 engaging featurettes and much, much more!



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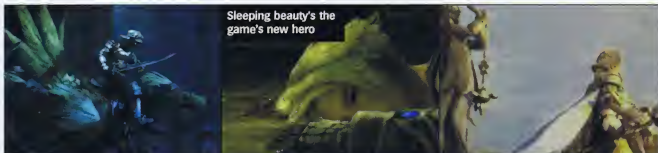
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AVAILABLE NOW

NEVER-ENDING STORY

NOT SO FINAL FANTASY

The twelfth game in the epic RPG series appears



Sleeping beauty's the game's new hero

Details on *Final Fantasy XII* are still as filmy as Rikku's costume but we have at least been privy to a brand new trailer. In it we can see the mysterious new hero of the game, who's either a girly-man or flat-chested girl. It's always so hard to tell with *Final Fantasy* characters.

Graphics whores will be pleased to hear that all of the

characters now sport animated hair and clothing – in real time, baby! The backgrounds are even lushier than ever as well. One of the locales we saw was a Naboo-esque metropolis [that's the pretty looking city in *Star Wars: Episode I* for the slow-witted guys in the back row] complete with huge flying airships and crowds of people dressed like someone from a Shakespearean play.

The game's combat seems to be sticking to the popular turn-based team battles, with even more monstrous creatures able to be summoned. Confusingly, we also spotted a scene with a couple of spaceships blasting a city to pieces. Bizarre. We're expecting a wealth of *Final Fantasy*-related news to be released during E3, so keep those RPG eyes peeled. **A NP**

GO SNOOKER LOOPY ONLINE

Top developer Codemasters is bringing the latest version of its *World Championship Snooker* series to Australia via Atari this winter. The surprisingly titled *Ultra-Galactic Snookerbot Takes Over Pluto* will feature... oh... wait a minute... it's called *World Championship Snooker 2004*, actually. Our mistake. It'll feature all the real players, tournaments and venues you could want, plus it'll be fully playable online, allowing you to always find someone to play against. Oh, and if the snooker ever gets too much for you, 9-ball and 9-ball pool are also featured.

NAUGHTY DOG BOSS LET OFF THE LEASH

Jason Rubin, president of *Jok & Daxter* developer Naughty Dog, has announced that he'll be leaving the company as soon as work on *Jok III* is finished. A few days after giving a rousing speech at the DICE Summit where he called upon games publishers to give development teams more credit, more respect and more creative freedom, he revealed that he would be leaving Sony-owned Naughty Dog to take on new challenges and create something new. I want to refuel my passion for the business of gaming," he added. *Jok III*'s release won't be affected in any way by this news, so don't worry yourselves about it too much



V8 SUPERCARS 2 MODES REVEALED

Sure, it's annoying having to wait for a game such as *V8 Supercars 2*, but when it's looking as good as this is, it's almost worth all the pain. New tracks include Surfers Paradise, Barbagallo, Pukekohe and Hidden Valley, and new teams include Team Kiwi, Ford Performance Racing and, yes, Holden Racing Team. Authenticity is paramount this time around, so the point system and official rules of the 2003 season have been fully integrated into the game and qualifying, top ten shootouts and compulsory fuel and pit stops have all been added. In addition to the V8 championship, the game will feature 30 other global championships, including DTM, open wheelers, supertrucks, rally and even hot rod racing. Expect a full review of the fine-tuned PS2 version soon.

FOOLED YA!

You may have noticed something a little fishy about one of our news stories last month, such as our *World Exclusive* screenshot of *Resident Evil: Outbreak* – the first ever survival-horror to be set in the blazing sunshine of the Australian desert. In case you didn't notice, last month was April, so we played a bit of a joke on you and made the whole stupid thing up! If you believed it – April fool!

WAR-TORN

"SMELLS LIKE... VICTORY"

First pictures of *Conflict: Vietnam*

Martin Sheen went there in *Apocalypse Now*, Charlie Sheen went there in *Platoon*, and now the makers of the successful *Conflict: Desert Storm* series are taking us back to the steamy jungles of Vietnam.

Conflict: Vietnam is the story of four US soldiers cut off from the rest of their unit during the 1968 Tet Offensive, when the Vietcong launched a series of

attacks on US-occupied cities and bases. Your four-man squad must make its way back through enemy territory to safety over 14 missions, from gunboat trips down enemy-infested rivers to hostage rescues in VC-held villages. The good news is your squad is armed to the teeth and will be able to scavenge weapons and find transport, including tanks, boats and even helicopters. **A LR**

Looks like the conflict resolution classes didn't work



1. R.Y.N.O.
[RATCHET AND CLANK]

Such a difficult choice, because the Morph-O-Ray that turns enemies into chickens is so cool. But R.Y.N.O. stands for 'Rip You a New One', and that has to take the cake.

2. RAIL DRIVER
[RED FACTION II]

Firing an aluminium spike at close to the speed of light isn't going to be good for anybody's long-term well being.

3. PLASTIC BAG (MANHUNT)

Not only is the humble plastic bag lethal to dolphins, when used in conjunction with a few sharp jabs to the head it's also none too healthy for the bounty hunting folk of Carcer City.

4. TETHER GUN (METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM)

Using this little baby allows you to hack into enemy robots and gain control of all their abilities. Go on a killing spree while remaining perfectly safe? Nice.

5. M60 (HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN)

When you absolutely, positively have to kill every last person in mother in the room.

6. CHAINSAW (GTA: VC)

We think the OFLC lads must have skipped out for lunch while this one was demonstrated.

7. REDMOND THE RABBIT (WHIPLASH)

This bunny is harder than quadratic equations. Set him on fire, freeze him in an ice cube and use him as furry mace.

8. HF BLADE (METAL GEAR SOLID 2)

Slicing through terrorists has never been this fun.

9. VENOM (RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN)

Unleashes a wall of lead quicker than you can say "What the hell was that noise?"

10. TASER (SYPHON FILTER)

Send 500,000 volts directly into an enemy's fragile little body.

SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

World exclusive peek at top-secret game!

The only info you'll get out of us is that this game is from THQ and will be revealed at E3 in May...

Gotta love the brain-sucking alien action and the look of underpants-filling terror on the dude's face!

But who will we get to play as? Humans or saucer-men? Tune in next month to find out!

Check out the smart 1950s sci-fi comicbook style of the graphics. Super-cool!



THE YEAR THAT WAS

1984

Each month OPS2 revs up the office time machine and takes you back to yesteryear

It may be hard to believe, but in 1984 the videogame industry was already 12 years old and the pace was completely out of control. There's barely enough room these days for three consoles in the market, but in the years leading up to 1984 there were at least ten different systems available, with more on the horizon. But something had to give, and in 1984 it did. Even George Orwell couldn't have expected a crash of this proportion.

It was in this year that Milton Bradley began distributing the Vectrex, but after a series of price drops it eventually retailed for just \$100. They should have stuck to board games, because MB was losing money on every sale and quickly cancelled the Vectrex.



STRAIN YER EYES

ROBOT IN DISGUISE

Track down the evil Decepticlone and win!

WIN!

Time to give your eyes a bit of a work-out again. This month, one of the evil Decepticlones from Atari's excellent new Transformers game has escaped and hidden himself somewhere in the magazine. Bool! We've got 10 copies of the game to give away - to stand a chance of winning one you just need to let us know where he can be found. Please note that it's the robot here on the right that you're looking for ONLY. And also please note that he's NOT in the Transformers review on page 54. He's somewhere else - and it's got to be THIS robot printed here! Okay? No being stupid and saying he's the big robot on the cover! Transformers, developed by Melbourne House, is out now through Atari. **EL**



EDUCATED GUESS

GTA: RUMOUR CITY

Tiny bits of info hint at possible San Andreas features

While Rockstar Games is saying nothing about the newly announced GTA: San Andreas, an advert placed at a casting agency recently featured reading scripts for three new characters, all taken from well-known movies.

Maccor is described as a "Manchester-born white male, 22," and had dialogue from British clubbing film Human Traffic, a guy called Mad Dogg is a "Black American male, 23" who spoke the words of O-Dog from gangsta movie

Menace II Society, and Maria, a "young Italian female", had lines from the movie Colors.

Based on these snippets, we reckon the game will be set around 1990 in a Los Angeles/San Francisco-style West Coast city. We expect Compton gang battles, Latino crooks, corrupt cops, huge riots and movie stars, complete with a gangsta rap, Guns 'N' Roses-style metal, and acid house soundtrack.

We're only guessing, mind you - proper info soon! **EL**



At the expense of ColecoVision, Coleco began producing a home system, rather crudely called Adam. Turns out this was a bad idea as around 60 percent of Coleco Adams were returned faulty. Coleco never recovered from the massive losses and filed for bankruptcy four years later.

After heavy losses, Mattel shut down Mattel Electronics. A Mattel vice-president bought the division and renamed it Intellivision Inc. At the same time, Nintendo announced plans to release the Famicom in the US, with the new name 'NES' (Nintendo Entertainment System).

But in the midst of all this chaos, there were some instant classics that are still remembered today, like Pitfall and James Bond 007 on the Atari 5200, or River Raid and Boulder Dash on the Commodore 64. Twenty years later, Pitfall has just received a next generation update, and Bond has recently reappeared in Everything or Nothing. Can you feel the energy? It's circular, it's like a carousel, round and round.



HOW TO ENTER - Send entries to OPS2@edwardward.com.au with "Robot in Disguise" in the subject line or alternatively, send envelopes via snail mail to: Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, PO Box 1033, Bondi Junction, NSW 1585. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 16 June, 2004. This comp is also open to NZ residents.

- 1**  **NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND** just can't be stopped. Even 16 weeks after it was released it still takes another victory lap around the charts in the number one spot. Ditching the cops and robbers from the previous games sure was a smart move.
- 2**  **MX UNLEASHED** is a bit of a surprise entry at number two. Its 'less serious, more crazy stunts' focus seems to have been a lot more popular with punters than Activision's similar MX: Motorbros. We'll see next month whether it has staying power.
- 3**  **BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II** slashes its way into the charts. The last Baldur's Gate game offered intense action within the detailed world of Dungeons & Dragons, but it was most successful because of its quality two-player co-op.

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4	GTA: Vice City	Adventure	Take 2
5	Final Fantasy X-2	Adventure	EA
6	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Adventure	Vivendi
7	SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs	Shooter	Sony
8	Rugby League	Sports	Tri Blu
9	Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Shooter	Ubisoft
10	James Bond: EON	Shooter	EA

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

MAY

America's 10 Most Wanted	Action	Red Ant
Champions Of Norrath	Action/RPG	Ubisoft
Cy Girls	Action	Atari
Euro 2004	Sports	EA
Harry Potter & The Prisoner Of Azkaban	Adventure	EA
Headhunter: Redemption	Action	Atari
Hitman: Contracts	Shooter	Atari
Hyper Street Fighter II	Fighting	THQ
Karaoke Stage	Singing	Atari
Project Zero 2	Horror	Ubisoft
SingStar	Singing	Sony
Snowdown: Legends Of Wrestling	Wrestling	Acclaim
The Suffering	Horror	Red Ant
This Is Soccer 2004	Sports	Sony
Transformers	Action	Atari
Van Helsing	Action	Vivendi

JUNE

Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Shooter	Acclaim
Driv3r	Driving	Atari
Formula One 2004	Racing	Sony
Hack Vol 2 - Mutation	RPG	Atari
MTV Music Generator 3	Music	Atari
Samurai Jack	Action	Atari
Shellshock: Nam '67	Shooter	Atari
Shrek 2	Adventure	Activision
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2	Sports	Sony
Spyglass Films: The Omega Strain	Shooter	Sony
X-Files: Resist Or Serve	Horror	Vivendi

JULY

Catwoman	Action	EA
Richard Burns Rally	Racing	Atari
Spider-Man 2	Action	Activision

SEPTEMBER

Gradius V	Shooter	Atari
Jacob	Racing	Acclaim
Ribbit King	Adventure	Atari
Shrek: Hit & Run	Horror	Atari

OCTOBER

100 Bullets	Shooter	Acclaim
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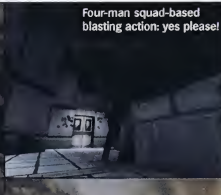
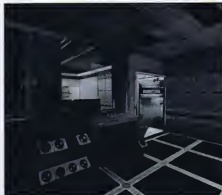


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EXCLUSIVE DEAL

GUERRILLA TACTICS

Killzone developer to create exclusively for PS2



Four-man squad-based blasting action: yes please!

European development studio Guerrilla and Sony Computer Entertainment Europe have signed an important deal that will see Guerrilla develop titles exclusively for PlayStation 2 and future Sony platforms.

Particularly observant readers might recall that Guerrilla is currently hard at work on the highly anticipated Killzone, which should arrive later this year, but will be publicly revealed for the first time in May at E3 in Los Angeles. The deal will see Killzone and all future Guerrilla titles appearing exclusively on

PlayStation 2. The only exception is Shellshock: Nam '67, which will appear on PS2 and other formats. Previously kept under wraps for over 16 months, Killzone was buried beneath a pile of top-secret non-disclosure agreements, but since its announcement late last year has quickly become one of the most hotly expected titles

In recent memory. Touted by some as Sony's answer to Halo, Killzone is an intensely atmospheric first-person shooter set in the not too distant future across huge, dynamic levels. Even at this stage, it's looking like one of the year's biggest titles, and we'll have more details in the coming months. **LR**

Even at this stage, it's looking like one of the year's biggest titles, and we'll have more details in the coming months. **LR**

GT SAMPLER

TURISMO TEASER

Gran Turismo 4 delay might not be all bad

We hate bad news here. That's why we were so upset to have to tell you that Gran Turismo 4 wouldn't be coming out until the end of 2004 in last month's Loading...

But before you smash your PS2 to pieces in frustration, read on, because it might not be all bad news. Previously, Sony had little intention of releasing the miniature game sampler Gran Turismo 4: Prologue, because with the full version so close to release it seemed to make little sense. Now with this setback, Sony is planning to take Gran Turismo 4: Prologue to Europe by the end of May. Sony won't confirm whether an Australian release is also on the cards, but we reckon a limited release over here is very possible.

GT 4: Prologue, which is already out in Japan, is a teaser to the full game. With limited features and a budget price tag, Prologue also includes a personal message from creator Kazunori Yamauchi and a special 'Making Of DVD'. **LR**

PIXAR'S RETURN

INCREDIBLE!

Never fear - The Incredibles are coming!

Top animation studio Pixar's follow-up to Finding Nemo is The Incredibles, and it's on its way to a PlayStation 2 near you.

The movie follows over-the-hill super hero Mr Incredible as he slips on his badly fitting spandex for one last battle against his nemesis, Frozone.

So far little has been revealed about the PS2 game, but as you can see from these early character graphics, things are already looking sweet. Full details coming soon! **LR**



Mr Incredible goes for his morning jog on the beach

TOM CLANCY'S
**GHOST
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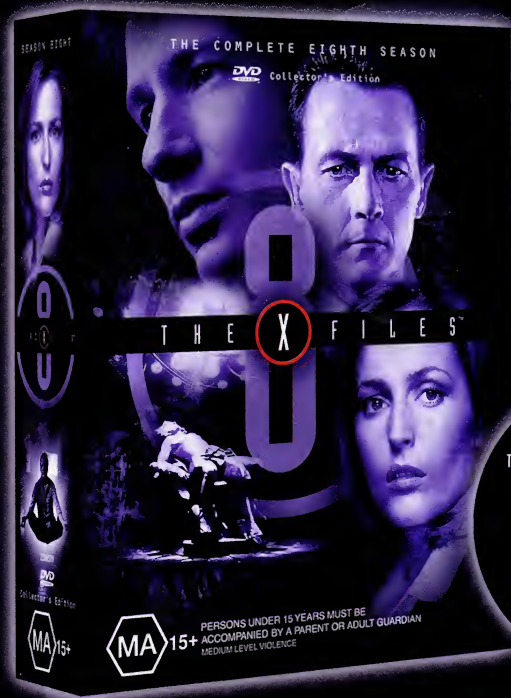
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feedback

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It's your page people – where you get to voice your opinions to the PS2 universe!

Your opinions are important to us – that's why we've decided to move the Feedback section to the front of the magazine from now on. If you've got something relating to PlayStation 2 gaming or Official PS2 Magazine that you want the world to know about – anything at all – drop us a line, because we'd love to hear from you. We also reward the best letter we receive each month with an exclusive Atari T-shirt, so get writing!
Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au

Paper: OPS2 Feedback, Derwent Howard, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1555



COVER VERSIONS

Hey guys,

First I have a bit of butt-kissing to do. Let me just say you guys have the best magazine on the market, bar none. Okay, now that's over, to the reason I'm writing – videogame covers! Earlier today I was reading reviews on the Internet and I came across an American website. After reading their reviews of my favourite games I realised that the cases their games come in are incredibly detailed and appealing, unlike the ones we have in Australia.

Take *Final Fantasy X*, for example. We get a bland, white cover with the game name written on it, whereas the cover they get is colourful and vibrant with a picture of Tidus holding his sword engulfed by the ocean and in *Final Fantasy X-2* all we

get is the exact same cover as *FFX* but with a little *X-2* on it instead.

So my question to you – *OPS2* – is why does Australia always get the raw end of the deal?
Michael Nicholson, via email

Game covers often vary from country to country to cater for the different territories' tastes. In general, Japanese game covers are more cartoony, with hand-drawn 2D artwork of the main characters; American covers are usually very loud and flashy, normally with rendered 3D artwork (and explosions); and European and Australian covers often go for a more subtle, stylish approach. In the case of *Final Fantasy X*, we got the same cover as the original Japanese release...

So you're not getting simpler covers because Australian companies are trying to save money on ink or anything like that – it's because in general people over here like their games to look a bit classier and more grown-up, kind of like special edition DVD packaging.

IS THIS A DISTURBING TREND?

Hello guys,

Recently I have been informed by the staff at my local games shop of a very disturbing trend in the gaming industry. Apparently the Xbox storm troopers are using their muscle to buy exclusive monthly time rights to certain multi-platform games such as *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II*, *Driv3r*, *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* and *Starcraft: Ghost*. This tends to leave the other consoles out in the cold for the initial time period, purchased by the Microsoft people.

How can the industry stand for such tactics? Didn't this company learn anything from the anti-trust case in America? Didn't it teach these suits anything or are they just trying to muscle in on another area and will probably stuff

that up as well as the computer industry? Is there anything you guys can do for the multitude of casual to hardcore PS2 gamers out here? We need your muscle to help stop this rubbish and get gaming back onto an equal footing. Thanks guys.
Brad G, via email

This isn't a new trend, Brad – it's been happening for years. Haven't you noticed how Xbox is only now getting games like *GTA3* years after we did on PS2? And how the *Metal Gear Solid* series took ages to make it over there? And how *GTA: San Andreas* will be out on PlayStation 2 long before any other format? It's just the way the games industry works – companies will pay a lot of money to make sure that people who own their console get to play a game first. And there's absolutely nothing to worry about – the PS2 is set to get the vast majority of multi-format games first. We know, when it happens it can be frustrating, but just enjoy what you're getting early and be patient for the games you do need to wait for – the upside is they'll often be improved by the time they arrive anyway!

ONLINE OR NON-LINE?

Hello OPS2,

I have recently considered getting broadband so I can play games online with my PS2, but I keep having this little nagging thought in the back of my head that says, "Why bother?"

As we all know, America and Japan usually get their games waaaaay before we do, which I think is best demonstrated by Square, since they're releasing *FFXII* in Japan soon, but we've only just got *FFX-2*, let alone *FFXI*. I understand it needs some translating and we sometimes get "reworked" versions of games, but Japan got *FFX-2* on March 13th 2003 (almost a whole year ago) and America got it on November 18th 2003, so it's obviously been translated to English for the US, but they still got it three months sooner than us. Is it because the boats are really slow or something?

Anyways, back to the point: In theory, the Yanks and the Japanese are going to be server-dominating pros at the games before we even get a chance to unwrap our brand-new game package... So with that in mind, us Aussies are probably gonna get beaten senseless by a horde of Americans on their quest for world domination, all because they had a three- to six-month head start on mastering a particular game. Is this how it's going to be, or are we going to be just playing Aussies? I vaguely recall reading something about there being no international play on consoles. Is this true?

Thank you again for your time and I hope you can help clear up these things for me. Ciao for now...
Jai, via email

Network Gaming titles vary as to whether you play against the whole world or just the whole country – it's down to the individual game developers to either choose whether you connect to international or national servers. Obviously if the language barrier, or the possibility of lag over long distances could detract from the gameplay, playing on a foster Aussie-exclusive server is a good thing. As for other countries getting a head-start on you, you shouldn't worry – there are always plenty of games that you can join, so you'll always be able to find people of the same skill level as you. Now quit your worrying, get online and enjoy!

NO MORE... PLEASE!

Dear OPS2,

When is PS3 set to come out? I hear the graphics are basically like real life and has the power of 12 PS2s strapped together. See ya's
Jarrod, via email

To Jarrod and everyone else – we don't know when PS3 is going to come out. Sorry doesn't know either, because it's still busy designing the thing! We are trying to find out – and you'll be the first to know when we do. But remember – it's going to be a long time yet, so don't worry yourselves over it. Just carry on enjoying your PS2s now and old the hot games that are coming out!

DIVINE PUBLICATION

Dear OPS2,

About three months ago as I was sleeping an angel came to me and told me I had been deprived all my life. When I asked her why, she promptly handed me your magazine and since then I have been hooked. I never knew what my humble PS2 had bestowed upon me, and it was not a burden but a thing to look forward to every month. I also discovered that Narayan had made the jump from the old N64 magazine to this magazine which added to my excitement. In conclusion, I would like to say that *GTA4* had better live up to its reputation or else I have nothing to live for.
Ash Deppeler, VIC

We don't know why Narayan working here is so exciting for you – it's certainly not exciting for us to be working with him. He makes the office smell of Hungry Jack's oil the time, and we have to listen to him rave on about Root Beer Tapper every day of our depressing, burger-scented lives...

HANDS-ON

NAME: **THE RED STAR**
 DISTRIBUTOR: **ACCLAIM**
 DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM AUSTIN**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.THEREDSTARGAME.COM**
 LAST SEEN: **FIRST LOOK**
 RELEASE DATE: **LATE 2004**

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE
 30%

THE RED STAR might be the bee's knees for fans of slick arcade action. It could become everything *Contra*: *Shattered Soldier* wasn't.

THE RED STAR ★

SHE'S GOT THE MOVES

Your fighting-mad characters know they look the biz, and far from just wanting to talk up their might through heroic poses they also want to back it up with attention-grabbing move sets. Kyuzo, for instance, loves to indulge in a bit of smackety-smack using his large sword-like accessory. The developers have also told us they plan to allow him to grab enemies and throw them around the screen similar to the old arcade brawlers like *Fist Fight*. Makita, being the little 'un, can dash around *Shinobi*-style, moving quickly onto enemies and hacking them up with fast blows. While Maya wasn't playable in the version we saw, it's likely she'll be the balanced character of the group, able to wield protocols, guns and limbs with death-inducing panache.



X ACTION

THE RED STAR

The Reds are comin' – the Reds are comin'!!

Well, well, well – what do we have here? Looks like – yes, we believe it is – another comic-cum-videogame slap dab in the making. But hold on a second folks, there are no spandex-strutting buffoons anywhere around in these well-linked woods. What gives?

It turns out that *The Red Star* comic book is far from your normal dorky superhero nonsense, and as such the game is on its way to being more than the bog-standard supertripe we're used to. The setting is the first thing that escalates the license above current froth.

Set in a futuristic, alternate Russian reality, *The Red Star* illustrates a country that has mastered magic to the point of shifting it from mysterious art form to hard science. For instance, spells and technology are so synonymous, that people no longer cast spells, but rather cast "protocols". Using such techno-sorcery, warrior witches and warlocks fight against and alongside soldiers brandishing all manner of new weaponry. These same soldiers can also teleport or, as the fiction describes, "gate" to any given area at any time through the use of wormhole-like deployment points, meaning story-turning skirmishes can occur at almost any time.

Set amid this head-blending turbulence is a band of

Russian comrades on a quest to save their people from themselves. Similar to your archetypal band of heroes, each character compliments the group by adding their unique skills to the abilities kitty. Maya, for example, is the sorceress of the group, able to wield some mean-ass protocols. Makita is the young girly street squirt who serendipitously found her way into the group and now that she's in, uses her speed, small stature and sickle to deal out hardcore death to rude opposition. Then there's Kyuzo. Ah, Kyuzo, the typical muscle-infested menace. He's into big firearms and slamming enemy soldiers' heads into hard surfaces. He's a simple guy. Of course the comic features many more characters, but these are three of the main ones who also happen to deal out the ass-tanning in the game.

"What is the game?" After describing the creatively malleable nature of the license and its world, it could've been anything. From adventure to RTS, a good license such as this could mould its way into any genre. Thankfully, however, *The Red Star* video game knows precisely what it is – that being a scrolling arcade-styled punch-'em-up shooter. Wahool

For one or two players, you pick a character from the above selection, then go on a rampage that would

belittle the tantrums of any "not-getting-any" maths teacher. While you're free to unlock your burning laser beams and pelt foes with sprite-like pellets of wrath, it's often a good idea to break out the fisticuffs and take advantage of the game's hand-to-hand combat system. Here you can interrupt the standard combos with mean charged-up attacks that cause all sorts of discomfort for the fodder. Cool, ay?

But sometimes melee ain't dope enough. A big part of the game is stretching your trigger finger and pounding some larger enemies with your firearms of tomorrow. When such combat occurs the game is reminiscent of old-style *Contra* games. Enemy bullets fill the screen, but, according to the developers, you can avoid each and every one of them if you're good enough.

It's clear that the hardcore programming mammas up at Acclaim Austin are quite proud of this destructive tyke in their development womb, as are the creatives behind the comic book itself. From what *OPS2* can tell, *The Red Star*, with its comic-like presentation and comprehensible gameplay, should be one of the system's dominant shooters on release.

Among the huge catalogue of games coming for the year, be sure to keep your eye on this one. **B JE**



There are plenty of spectacular effects to behold



The detail and frame-rate are both looking great already

The dark futuristic setting is looking suitably grimy

SHE'S GOT THE LOOK

Like being struck across the left cheek with a frozen mackerel, the visuals for this Acclaim title get your attention fast. It's not that they're earth-shattering in terms of technical prowess, but rather you can instantly appreciate the slick comic feel that snugly saturates the overall look. It doesn't look kiddie or cheap either, instead looking how the artists want it to look – like a visually polished comic. The characters remind us of art from games like *Copcom Vs. SNK*, but the world textures have a chilled translucent look ripped straight from *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s future-tech levels. Such shenanigans don't mean anything if the game runs like a three-legged dog, but thankfully all is well in terms of frame rate at this stage. Enemies, bullets, massive spacecrafts and, of course, our heroes can all co-exist onscreen without causing a stutter. The protocols, consisting of chunky laser beams and other over-the-top pyrotechnics, light the screen up and the sight of dozens of soldiers congregating makes the whole thing look like some fit-inducing laser maelstrom. Cool.

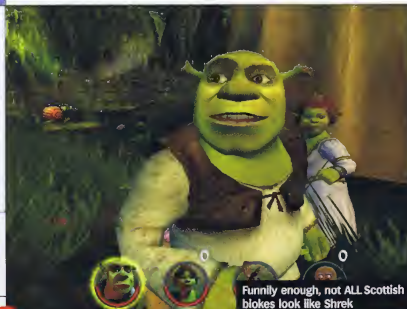


HANDS-ON

NAME: SHREK 2
 DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
 DEVELOPER: LUXOFLEX
 WEBSITE: WWW.SHREK2.COM (MOVIE SITE)
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: JUNE

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

SHREK 2's minor technical problems shouldn't stop the game from being an altogether jolly frolic with some fresh gameplay ideas.



ACTION-ADVENTURE

SHREK 2

Dreamworks' belching ogre is popping into PS2 town for his new adventure

Franks, the consensus from those who played the first Shrek was that it was a woeful piece of shite. Well, you'll be glad to hear that Shrek 2, with a new publisher (Activision), a new developer (Luxoflex, of True Crime fame) and a new lease of life, is likely to be a vast improvement on its predecessor.

Actually, it looks as if it's shaping up to be a very tidy adventure indeed. The plot loosely follows that of the Shrek 2 movie. Princess Fiona's parents have invited Fiona and Shrek to visit and so, along with Donkey, set out for Far Far Away Land – with in-law fun to ensue.

The gameplay is pretty stock-standard – beating on evil dudes, solving puzzles, rescuing princesses... er, ogres, collecting stuff. What pushes it out of the realm of the ho-hum is its unique party system. At any given time, there are four members in your party. Yes, yes, we know – Shrek plus Fiona plus Donkey only equals three. The fourth character changes from chapter to chapter, with old friends and newcomers alike – there are 10 extra characters in all – putting in an appearance.

Also, each character has specific abilities. Shrek, apart from being the party's resident bruiser, can pick up and throw enemies and items. Donkey has a super-powerful kick that can fell trees. Fiona, for some odd reason, can

create a Matrix-style bullet-time to make with the ass-whuppin'. Little Red (Riding Hood) hurls poisoned apples, Gingerbread Man drops cookies to lure enemies, and Puss in Boots can walk tightropes. Each of these abilities is needed for solving puzzles, but at times you will need to combine abilities by switching characters.

The three additional characters will follow the character you control, acting on autopilot. They won't run around collecting stuff or anything like that – it'll be up to you, of course, to play the actual game – but they will participate in melees, making it much easier to switch without having to pause the game at all. We found that they can get a little irritating, following you around constantly and getting in the way, or pulling the camera away from what you want to see, but we'll have to see if they calm down for the final game.

The other thing all this four-character stuff means is that – yep – the game has four-player co-operative capability. And, as with the character-switching, another player can join or leave the game seamlessly. None of this pausing malarkey whatsoever.

It's sounding pretty good, huh? Well, don't go insane just yet. Shrek 2 currently has some irritating problems. For starters, as mentioned before, the other three

characters can be really annoying. Really. They block your path and your view and at times can get in the way of your puzzle-solving. You might find yourself trying to shove past them to get to a switch, or you'll get confused over which character you're actually controlling when they're all clustered together in a group. Also, the camera sometimes zooms out in order to view all four characters at the same time, so if they wander all over the place, you might have trouble seeing what you're doing. Yes, the advantages make up for this, but it does make you want to cut their cute little heads off.

The other downfall is most definitely the camera. Having to control the camera at every minute of the game is not high on the list of fun. As it stands, not much can be done about it – given the nature of the four-character gameplay, the camera has to follow all four characters all the time.

However, for the most part, Shrek 2 looks like it's going to be very decent all round. While there are some problems with the technicalities, the character-driven game offers up good chuckles, kooky characters, and good fun for all the family. And there are just enough eyeballs to stop it from being entirely too wholesome. It should have a similar charm to the movie. **B- MS**



HULK SMASH!

All the characters have different abilities and attacks, and are better at different things. For example, Little Red can jump higher than Fiona, and Donkey can kick down walls where Shrek's brute strength might fail. This means that you have to think about the puzzles very carefully, and who would be best for what. Lateral thinking will definitely come into play once all the puzzles are put in place for the final game. Just as Little Red can jump onto ledges that the others can't quite reach, Gingerbread Man can throw his candy cane like a boomerang; and Puss in Boots can walk tightropes. The combinations you will have to think up can be pretty obscure, too – Puss might have to climb on a see-saw, as Shrek belly-flops the other end to catapult him up to a rope high above. But, while you may have to employ a bit of creative thinking from time to time, it won't be a serious strain on your mental faculties – leaving you plenty of room to enjoy the strong characterisation and gross-out humour that form the backbone of the game. Two and three character combinations have been used in games before, but Shrek 2's teamwork is looking to be something else.



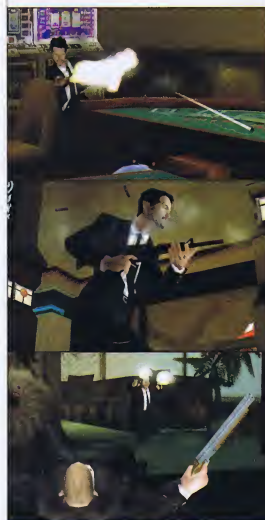
HANDS-ON

NAME: 100 BULLETS
 DISTRIBUTOR: ACCLAIM
 DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM
 WEBSITE: WWW.DCCOMICS.COM
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: TBC 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

100 BULLETS has the genuine makings of a solid shooter packed with story and head-turning gore. Will it get there? Stay tuned.

**100
BULLETS**



"Whoever lives gets to use the car tonight. Deal?"



What's the deal with holding your gun like that, anyway?



"I've got 97 more bullets than you do!"



Melbourne is really starting to resemble New York.

THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

100 BULLETS

Look out! Here comes another bald man bent on dishing out death

Unadulterated, blood-obsessed revenge is the name of the game in *100 Bullets*, the upcoming third-person shooter from Acclaim's Austin Studios. Like the majority of license-based development being produced in videogamedom, it's based on a comic book. The game's story has been penned by former DC scribe Brian Azzarello who's also the original comic book's creator, so expect some hard-boiled noir-ish narrative as you move through the game world being hunted, betrayed, set up and manipulated. It centres on enigmatic figure Agent Graves who offers seemingly random people the opportunity to exact revenge on their most-hated while guaranteeing impunity. He does this by supplying them with a briefcase that holds all the documents and information they'll need to pull the deed off, as well as a gun with, you guessed it, 100 bullets. On top of that there's a secret government conspiracy-type angle to the gig, featuring a group of powerful people known as "The Trust". How they fit into the overarching scheme of things is yet to be revealed. As well as Agent Graves the game features comic favourite Cole Burns and glamour puss Snow Falls, who has been created especially for the game.

Currently, *100 Bullets* plays like the potty-mouthed,

bald-headed love child of *Hitman* and *Max Payne*. The emphasis throughout the game is on shooting, and as such, players can perform a slew of fanciful gunplay manoeuvres, including: diving backward while firing at an enemy, springing out from around walls, dishing out blind fire – shooting around corners while still remaining behind cover – counter attacks and more. The latter sees your character parry an enemy's strike before leaning in to either slit their throat or wrestle their head under your boot and blow them away from point-blank range. Building on that, the game currently allows you to grab an enemy and use them as a human shield. A nice addition is the way you can slam their heads against walls to keep them under control if you've held them too long. How edifying.

There are a few other nice touches to the game that should separate it from the *Max Payne* series. Some of the levels actually start out in one location, say a warehouse, and mimicking a flashback that the character is having, will morph into the location in the character's mind. Possibly the finest ace up *100 Bullets'* sleeve, though, is the yet-to-be revealed gameplay aspect that will, apparently, make Bullet Time its bitch. We'll see. **A JE**

A BULLET WITH A NAME!

An interview with *100 Bullets* writer and creator, Brian Azzarello

OPS2: When did you get started writing comics?
Brian Azzarello: *100 Bullets* started about five years ago.

OPS2: Before that were you into writing other stories?
BA: Yeah, but not really comics. It wasn't really something I set out to do, but I'm doing it now. Writing a game was something I never thought I'd do and now I've written one. It was a good experience and I'll

probably do another.

OPS2: Did you initially intend to get into TV or film when you started writing?
BA: I don't know. I kind of let things happen to me, rather than make them happen.

OPS2: What's the secret to having a good character that everyone can relate to?
BA: Give them faults. Everybody relates to other people's faults.



NAME: THE PUNISHER

DISTRIBUTOR: THO

DEVELOPER: VOLTION

WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM/PUNISHER/

LAST SEEN: **FIRST LOOK**

RELEASE DATE: LATE 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

152

THE PUNISHER has plenty of smart ideas, especially when it comes to squeezing crims for info, but we've yet to see how it plays.



We're not convinced they died of natural causes

"You wouldn't like me when I'm angry!"

When The Punisher asks for a hug, you say "Yes!"

CONTROL INTERROGATION BY MOVING THE LEFT ANALOG STICK UP

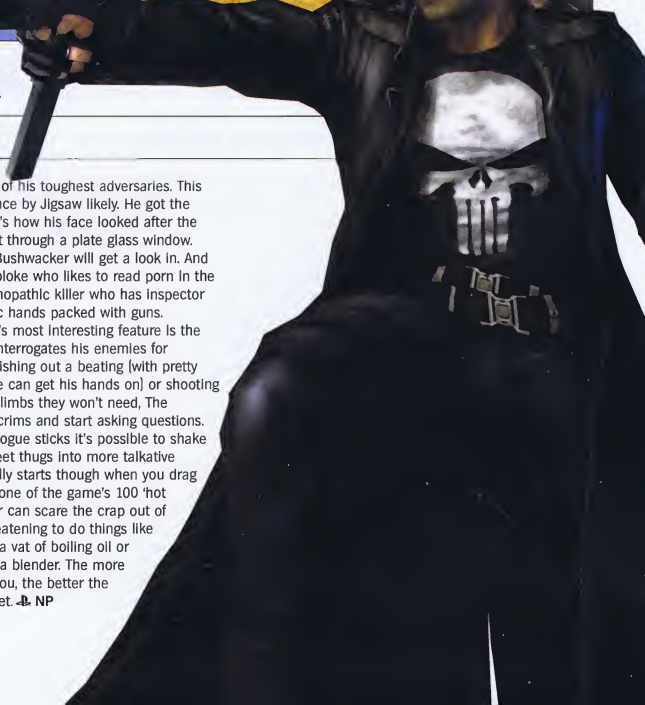
X THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

THE PUNISHER

Accept no substitutes

To ensure that the game stays as true to the style of the comic book as possible, THQ has hired two popular *Punisher* writers – Garth Ennis and Jimmy Palmiotti. The game's plot will also see *The Punisher*

Easily the game's most interesting feature is the way The Punisher interrogates his enemies for information. After dishing out a beating (with pretty much any object he can get his hands on) or shooting them in one of the limbs they won't need, The Punisher can grab criminals and start asking questions. Using the dual analog sticks it's possible to shake and pistol-whip street thugs into more talkative moods. The fun really starts though when you drag a crim over to any one of the game's 100 'hot spots'. The Punisher can scare the crap out of his enemies by threatening to do things like dip their head into a vat of boiling oil or grind their hand in a blender. The more the criminal fears you, the better the information you'll get. **B NP**



HANDS-ON

NAME: RED DEAD REVOLVER
 DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
 DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
 WEBSITE: WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM
 LAST SEEN: OPS2#26
 RELEASE DATE: APRIL 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

RED DEAD REVOLVER plays like *Metal Gear Solid* meets the Young Guns. This one's going to be serious fun! Start janglin' those spurs.

RED-DEAD



"Say hello to my little friends"



105 1111

\$1 6300



With heads like those you definitely won't feel bad shooting them

X THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER



Courage under fire is the only way to play

\$12

\$1 7700



105 1111

\$1300

RED DEAD REVOLVER

A wild west without black jeans and flano shirts – bring it on!

After the frustratingly brief play-time Take 2 gave us last month, we finally got to have a proper sit down with this wild shooter. And this time we came away with smiles bigger than a cowboy's on the way out of his favourite saloon.

Our biggest discovery was that there are actually multiple playable characters. As well as the star – Red – you'll get a chance to bat for the other team as Red's nemesis, General Diego. While Red has his cool Dead Eye slow-motion aiming ability, Diego's special ability sees him firing off flares. Don't worry, the flares aren't for anything sissy like calling for help. The General can use them to light up enemy gun emplacements, that will then be blasted to dust by his army's cannons.

Although we'd seen it before, our latest play-test allowed us to really appreciate how much fun Red's Dead Eye ability is. Unleashing the Dead Eye sees the action slow down to a crawl and all colour wash out off the screen. Red can now skim his crosshair over enemies with ease. Once all six targets have been acquired (one for each bullet in his gun) Red will fire off a lightning-fast volley of bullets. You can either be a showoff and nail six enemies (all with headshots) or you can pump all six bullets into various body parts on the

one enemy. Like all special abilities though, the Dead Eye must be used strategically because it takes several normal kills to recharge it.

There's also much more of an emphasis on combos during the shooting action. The more kills Red racks up in a short amount of time, the more cash he will get for the kills and the more goodies he can buy. And we're not just talking about whisky and cowgirls either. Red can use the cash to repair and upgrade his weapons, or buy new ones outright. Paying a visit to the gunsmith can see Red trading his pistols for authentic Owl rifles or some explosive fun like dynamite or Molotovs.

The action feels a lot like *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Red somersaults past open doors, he can press himself up against walls and pop out to shoot, and he can hop over obstacles such as fences effortlessly. This is no bad thing though, considering that the action in MGS2 is still some of the most polished gameplay ever. And more importantly, there's no sign of hour-long cut-scenes and pointless romantic sub-plots in this game. Red's all about the action, girls.

We saw a lot but Red's still keeping some surprises up his poncho. Check back next month when we'll reveal all (including multiplayer details) in our review. **A- NP**

TRAINING DAY

In another nod the classic arcade games of yesteryear, RDR includes a train chase sequence. Red rides up behind the train on his horse, taking shots at cowboys in the carriages. Whenever the bullets get too much for him, Red can slide off the saddle and hang onto the side, using his poor horse as a shield. We also saw a scene where he rode up beside a parallel train and used a Gatling gun on one of the carriages to blast the enemy train's engine until it blew up. This train chase is just one of many typical western scenes that pop up to give you a break from the on-foot shooting action. Our fingers are crossed for a Beer Tapper-style, western saloon mini-game.



HANDS-ON

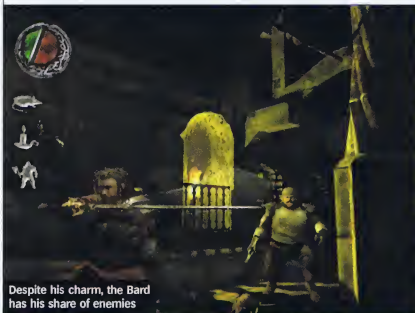
NAME: **THE BARD'S TALE**
 DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
 DEVELOPER: INXILE ENTERTAINMENT
 WEBSITE: WWW.INXILE-ENTERTAINMENT.COM
 LAST SEEN: **FIRST LOOK**
 RELEASE DATE: **SEPTEMBER 2004**

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

55%

THE BARD'S TALE relies on the plot's brilliance and humour. It's likely to succeed but we hope the humour can be maintained.

BARD'S TALE



Despite his charm, the Bard has his share of enemies



X ROLE-PLAYING GAME



The obligatory snow level – it is an RPG after all!

It's surprisingly similar to NBA Jam... "He's on FIRE!"

THE BARD'S TALE

Newcomer Inxile adds a little Shrek to the classic RPG formula

Most gamers have heard the expression: "Oh, it's just another RPG." It's an unfortunate joke – there's something endearing about formulas that work, but after years of playing multiple variations of the same RPG it's understandable that people will start to grumble. Enter newcomer Inxile (headed up by Brian Fargo) who has undertaken an ambitious project in *The Bard's Tale*.

Sick of the same "RPG experience" time and again, Fargo believes *The Bard's Tale* will offer something new. Much will rest on his central character (The Bard) and the humour and pacing of the game.

The Bard is like "a Han Solo-type character. He's only interested in coin and cleavage." And the game is already proving funny. It may be seen juvenile, but the Bard, like Solo, also has a lot of charm. The humour is certainly of an "adult" nature. From what *OPS2* has seen, there are plenty of drunken blokes, busty wenches and sexual innuendo to contend with.

The Bard is hardened and, like many gamers, he's sick of being on quests and sub-quests. While the game is poised to be a solid RPG, there are plenty of in-jokes that poke fun at the RPG genre in there.

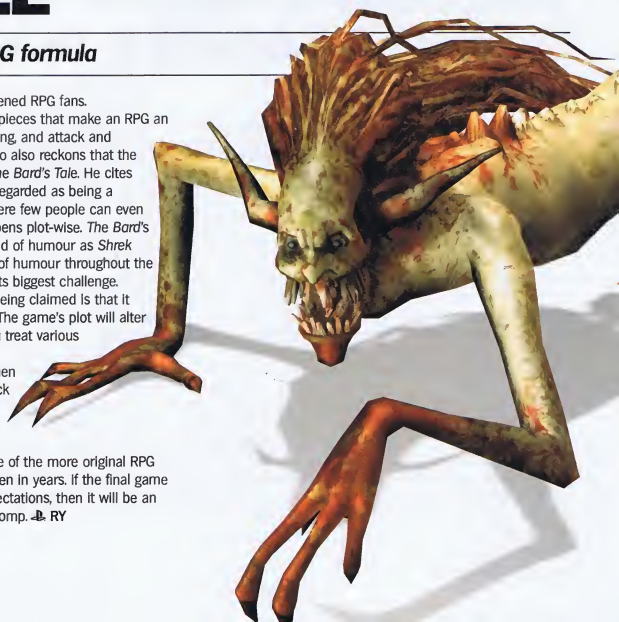
Despite this, the game is intended to appeal to both

casual gamers and hardened RPG fans.

With all the bits and pieces that make an RPG an RPG – such as summoning, and attack and defence elements – Fargo also reckons that the plot matters little with *The Bard's Tale*. He cites *Pulp Fiction*, where it is regarded as being a brilliant film, but one where few people can even recall what actually happens plot-wise. *The Bard's Tale* shares the same kind of humour as *Shrek* but sustaining that kind of humour throughout the game's duration will be its biggest challenge.

Another big feature being claimed is that it will be truly re-playable. The game's plot will alter – depending on how you treat various characters, for example. Ultimately, gamers will then be encouraged to go back (like a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book) to see different outcomes.

The Bard's Tale is one of the more original RPG games that *OPS2* has seen in years. If the final game can match our high expectations, then it will be an hilarious and enjoyable romp. **A- RY**



HANDS-ON

NAME: SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: NAMCO

WEBSITE: WWW.NAMCO.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2#26

RELEASE DATE: JUNE

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

SMASH COURT TENNIS

PRO TOURNAMENT 2 is already proving superior to its predecessor, despite being unfinished!



All the official ATP Grand Slams are in there – including Wimbledon



SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2

It's love-all from Namco

Tennis has always been a pretty small player in the world of sports games. For years, the biggest tennis title was always Namco's *Smash Court* series, but these days it has its work cut out to one-up Sega's excellent *Virtua Tennis 2*.

Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2 takes after its direct predecessor, *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament* and if you played that, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

First off, thanks to some super-skilled artificial intelligence the single-player mode is going to be hard. As in, throw-the-controller-through-your-TV-screen hard. Don't expect to pick it up easily straight away. The way the game is playing at this stage it is quite difficult, but this is a good thing.

When released, there will be a number of different gameplay modes where you'll be able to hone your skills. Of course, there will also be the pro tour mode, featuring official tournaments such as Wimbledon and the US Open. You can always get in lots of proper practice in the tutorial mode as well.

Action fans will want to jump into the arcade mode

for a quick crack at the major tournaments or the challenge mode's mini-games – so you can polish up your skills. An exhibition mode has also been packed in if you don't feel like having a long session. Lastly, there's a spectator mode for the lazy types.

Best of all though, as you'd expect, is the multiplayer mode – all you need is three friends and a multitap, and you can play two-on-two doubles.

The graphics aren't looking too bad at all – and are a vast improvement over the ones seen in the last game. The digitised characters actually look like their real-life counterparts, and each character has his or her own unique animations and reactions in the game. The variation is quite wide too – the characters will play up to the crowd after winning a set, wipe away a few tears after a crushing defeat, or throw prima donna tantrums if things don't go quite the way they might hope.

What do we reckon could be the game's major downfall? If you aren't gritting your teeth in frustration over its difficulty, you'll be grinding them in irritation at the awful soundtrack. Please change it Namco! **► MS**

HOLY HEWITT, BATMAN!

The number of playable stars has doubled since the first game, now including Serena Williams and Australia's Lleyton Hewitt. Others include old faves Lindsay Davenport and Anna Kournikova (with four different outfits!). And while you won't get any voice-acting, you will get some classic girl-grunting to keep your ears amused. Better still, in the tour mode you can create your own custom-made avatar, for that little bit of extra personality. With height and weight variables, you can make a truly bizarre-looking player and choose from 16 different face maps, 8 hairstyles, and a whole range of clothing, shoes, racquets and accessories.



HANDS-ON

NAME: RICHARD BURNS RALLY
 DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
 DEVELOPER: SCI
 WEBSITE: WWW.RICHARDBURNSRALLY.COM
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: MAY

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

RICHARD BURNS RALLY is proof the dev team has put some serious study time into car mechanics and damage effects.

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

Car mechanics are at a premium with Richard Burns

Each country features varying surface conditions

The loneliest place in the world is in the mind of a race driver...

RACING

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

Rally champ Richard Burns says rally games need to "get real"

The first time you take *Richard Burns Rally* for a spin around the track, you can tell immediately that SCI wants to make this the most realistic and authentic rally experience to date.

The car you select will react exactly like the car you drive to work or the beach. That is, if you happen to drive a Grade A rally machine around! If you're racing around at 70kmph in first gear then your car will naturally, overheat. Don't use your clutch properly and the car will stall and smash into a tree. Smash into a tree and your car will drive like you've just smashed into a tree. It will also react differently depending on the type of track you're on. You'll have no problems racing on road tracks, but things will get difficult when it's wet or if you're cruising on gravel – and it's even worse when snow is thrown into the equation.

All of the tracks from around the world will feature these types of weather conditions. We sped through six different countries – Great Britain, Finland, Japan, USA, France and Australia – with each one featuring its own unique characteristics. The Aussie track looked very hot and dry while on the opposite end of the scale, the Finnish track felt like we were racing in a snowstorm due to the low visibility making it difficult to stay on the track.

The Japanese and French tracks however, were also difficult to travel on due to the stunning backgrounds making it hard for us to avoid running down spectators at the side of the road.

Speaking of stunning, the vehicles are looking just as slick. We sped around in a Subaru, Mitsubishis and Toyotas and each handled like you'd imagined them to in real life. If you've ever been behind the wheel of one of these cars then you'll immediately notice the characteristics of each vehicle adding to the realism behind the game. If you've ever been in an accident then you'll also admire the damage system. Pretty much every part of the car can be damaged in some way. Tyres will go flat, oil will leak and brakes can fail leaving your car sounding like it's way overdue for a service. As we mentioned, your car will dent and damage with authenticity. Speed is important, but preserving and nursing your car through stages is also an important aspect in the world rally driving. **— PF**

THROW ON YOUR 'L' PLATES

If you're a rally virgin or you just don't know how to drive a manual then Richard Burns himself will take you back to driving school. Rich will take you through the basics like using the clutch, controlling your speed, translating your co-driver's "rally speak", what all those signs at the top of the screen mean, braking and anything else that will stop you from turning your car into a scrap heap. You'll need to be at your best because if Rich fails you then you won't be able to compete in any world tournaments. Considering how well Colin McRae's been racing in real life this might be just what he needs to put a little punch back under his bonnet.



HANDS-ON

NAME: SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING
 DISTRIBUTOR: ACCLAIM
 DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM
 PLAYERS: WWW.LEGENDSSHOWDOWN.COM
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: MAY

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

SHOWDOWN should have modern day bodyslammers looking over their shoulders! The old boys are coming to town!



X WRESTLING

"Don't ever use my eye
 moisturiser again!"

"Yep, hold it. This isn't
 going to hurt one bit."

OPS2 prefers the old wrestlers
 but not the old suits!

"Are you sure this radical new
 massage technique is safer?"

SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Slap on the speedos and body paint and get ready to rumble

It's April 1, 1990, Wrestlemania VI. Perhaps the biggest wrestling title fight ever is about to happen. Undisputed champion Hulk Hogan, is about to take on the new, perhaps equally popular, Ultimate Warrior. The crowd is silent, you've got a PS2 controller in your hand, your mate beside you has one too. The wrestlers enter and ignite the stadium like a flame in a zeppelin. Whoosh-kai! You're playing Acclaim's much improved wrestling game – Showdown: Legends Of Wrestling.

Crawling out from underneath the brown-stained reputation of the previous *Legends of Wrestling* games isn't going to be an easy experience. Not only does Showdown have to prove to fans that it's decent, but it has to compete with the totally rumblicious *SmackDown* series. After having a quick dig at the latest build, OPS2 is inclined to shout an excited "maybe". This new edition is substantially better than the two before it in many welcome ways.

For a start it's more accessible. No more fiddling and fuddling your way around moves, reversals and grapples. Anybody with a head full of brain knows that a wrestling

game is all about taking on your uninitiated mates in a battle anyone can win. Sure, there may be a few pointers required here and there, as well as the odd friendly curse spouted to cause a few mood spikes, but largely you can sit down and go for it. Showdown gets a tick there.

It includes a superior roster of wrestlers too. The big new addition is the Ultimate Warrior who makes his first videogame appearance in seven years. All the old favourites make a return, and you get an authentic tutorial that features the voice of Bret "Hitman" Hart.

Additionally the game modes are plentiful. The most welcome being the new Classic Matches mode, which sets up big encounters like the aforementioned Hogan Vs. Warrior finale. All the other game modes featured in *SmackDown* are recreated here as well, and the Create-A-Legend Mode returns.

It's doubtful whether Showdown will be able to beat *SmackDown* to a bloody pulp when it's released next month, but there is a strong chance it'll be just as slambunctious, and it's the undisputed champ when it comes to the heroes of yesteryear. **B. JE**

LET'S MEAT!

We talk to the big fella himself, the Ultimate Warrior

OPS2: What have you been up to since you retired from wrestling?
Ultimate Warrior: Positive things. Striving to achieve greater things than I've already done. I built a speaking career, using my unique life experiences, to go out and motivate young people that "power in your life comes from using your mind, not muscle." Who better to do that? I read tonnes of books, mostly *The Great Books of the Western World* and *Classical Literature*. I have two beautiful daughters, Indiana and Mattie, and spend time watching them grow.

OPS2: What is your opinion of the wrestlers of today?
Ultimate Warrior: I don't watch it [haven't since 1998; my last time in the ring] but I hear quite enough through the grapevine. On the whole, I think the creativity, there, is definitely lacking.



CHAMPIONS of NORRATH



IT'S ONE THING TO HAVE A HUGE SWORD.
IT'S ANOTHER TO KNOW HOW TO USE IT.



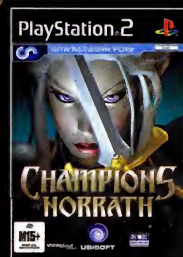
4 player combat online (no subscription fee)
via SOEGames.net and offline via Multitap.



45 levels of non-stop action with
over 50 areas to explore and conquer.



Constantly changing dungeons and monsters
make each game a new experience.



Slay your way through the glorious Realms of Everquest in a non-stop, hack 'n' slash
adventure brimming with heroic quests, beautiful locales, enchanted zones and
dark, mysterious dungeons.

snowblind
studios



PlayStation 2



UBISOFT

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sister

drink

more



101

GREATEST

PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES



See you soon
xooo Lara

hottie

STUFF WE NEED!

- * TOILET PAPER
- * GTA: SAN ANDREAS
- * BEROCCA
- * HARCUT
- * TIN OF SARDINES
- * MOUTH FRESHENER
- * MORE CONTROLLERS
- * BUBBLE BATH
- * BATTERIES

kiss and

behave

roomate

ly

We say it all the time in these very pages, "we're all so spoilt for choice these days!" The team at OPS2 Towers is old enough to remember the days when maybe, just maybe, one good game was released every few months. These days, of course, there are real AAA games hitting shop shelves all the time. When you look at the history of videogames, it's now that really is, to quote our man Jack Black, "the cat's pyjamas".

So, we decided to put together our top games, once and for all. When cobbling this included. What was of most interest to us though, was when we realised that there are plenty more games worthy of gracing this list that we just had to leave out to make a personal choice. Sure, *Metal Gear Solid* is undoubtedly an all-time classic, but we know it's not everyone's cup of tea. Inevitably, we're certain some of your favourite games have been left out of our Top 101 – but please let us know about it. Drop us an email and tell us how wrong, stupid and simply pathetic we are for leaving out *Monopoly Party*, or simply write the OPS2 Team warm letters that are so sickeningly oozing with praise that our heads will explode on the spot. Be sure to check out as many of these gems as you physically can – most of these will be regarded as classics in future years. And they'll only excite you even more about what's to come.

101 GREATEST

DON'T FORGET THIS WEEK

1. PAY THE GAS BILL
2. WASH UNDOES
3. GO SHOPPING
4. EAT
5. RECYCLE
6. GET A REAL JOB
7. WASH THE DISHES
8. TAKE ACE FOR A WALK
9. BE NICE TO THE NEIGHBOURS
10. ACT SOBER

research

my

ass

you

naked

hottie



Mwaaaaa
xooo Sophie

EASTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

1. GET FAT
2. MAKE CHOCOLATE, NOT WAR
3. WASH BUNNY SUIT
4. "CLEAN OUT" HARD DRIVE
5. VISIT NANNA
6. BEAT VOICE CITY AGAIN
7. TRY NOT TO LOSE LICENCE!



6/10

STATE OF EMERGENCY

What makes it great: The aim is to batter, shoot and maim your way through rioting mobs, trying to cause as much chaos as possible. It's shallow but bloody addictive!

Fun fact: After realising its graphics engine could handle hundreds of characters, Take 2 came up with the game's ideal

101



6/10

AFL LIVE 2004

What makes it great: It's AFL, that's what! One of the few games made exclusively for the Aussie market, and it's a great conversion of our very own football!

Fun fact: IR Gurus also makes other (cough) games based on the world of horses, including the official Saddle Club game.

100



8/10

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

What makes it great: The sense of freedom the game allows you to feel. Seamless transitions from space battles to FPS action give a real sense of a huge world that you inhabit.

Fun fact: Punk rocker Henry Rollins voices Mace. He used to be the lead singer of Black Flag and he's got a really fat neck.

99



7/10

KILL SWITCH

What makes it great: Casual no-look shooting, and the way the enemies cry like girls every time you lob a grenade their way makes for a satisfying and occasionally hysterical shooter.

Fun fact: One of the characters, Archer, is voiced by Adam Baldwin who has no relation to the famous Baldwin brothers.

98



7/10

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

What makes it great: In an over-represented genre, Kya's combo of tried-and-true moves with brand new tricks, such as free-falling and energy-bearding, makes for a new experience.

Fun fact: At E3 2002, Kya: Dark Lineage was announced as Kya: Fury of Brozyl. We think they made the right decision.

97

open more tequila




7/10

MOTO GP3

What makes it great: It possesses nearly flawless visuals, well-designed controls and comes jam-packed with options and modes galore. Easily the king of PS2 motorcycle racers.

Fun fact: Aussie heroes Mick Doohan and Wayne Gardner are unlockable riders in Moto GP3.

96



7/10

DOG'S LIFE

What makes it great: The ability to poop at will, the innovative "smell-o-vision" mode and the free-roaming setup of the gameplay all combine so you can really get inside the mind of a mutt.

Fun fact: Jake's voice actor Kerry Shale is no stranger to doggy roles - he also played a part in Disney's 102 Dalmatians.

95



7/10

WORMS 3D

What makes it great: Hilarious weapons, brain-bending strategy and backstabbing make its turn-based multiplayer gameplay more frantic than a match of TimeSplitters 2!

Fun fact: This isn't the first Worms game on PS2. They also appeared pointlessly in a puzzle game called Worms Blast.

94




3/10

RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA X

What makes it great: Huge, scary and full of flesh-chewing zombies, RE: CVX still looks appetising after more than two years. No wonder gamers are already salivating for the next one.

Fun fact: The game was actually released on Sega's tragic Dreamcast in early 2000 and didn't hit PS2 until a year later.

93



8/10

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

What makes it great: Lara's new stealthy moves give the series an extra dimension, plus the adventure's huge, with loads of plot twists and turns to keep you playing to the end.

Fun fact: The Tomb Raider film is the highest-grossing action movie with a woman in the lead role - the second is Aliens.

92



7/10

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

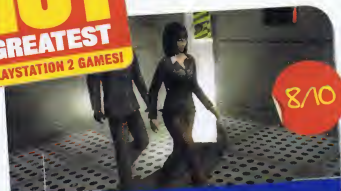
What makes it great: Smashing your way through whole armies with nothing more than a Bo staff just plain kicks arse. Scores of levels, characters and secret unlockables make this one a must-have for beat 'em up fans.

Fun fact: It reminds us of the cult classic TV show, Monkey!

91

honey

101 GREATEST PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES!



8/10

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: OPERATION SURMA

What makes it great: Ethan Hunt certainly has cooler gadgets than either Sam Fisher or Solid Snake ever had. This is a solid stealth title with enough thrills to keep gamers busy.
Fun fact: Tom Cruise is nowhere to be seen here. We reckon that fact is fairly fun, isn't it?

90



8/10

MAT HOFFMAN PRO BMX 2

What makes it great: Armed with a pumping soundtrack, challenges galore, polished level design and an extensive range of tricks, Mat Hoffman manages to stand apart from his board-riding extreme associates.
Fun fact: Hoffman rode in a fat suit in Jackass: The Movie.

89



8/10

MICRO MACHINES

What makes it great: Whizzing around oversized courses set in the attic, kitchen, bathroom, garden and beyond, with comedy power-ups adding to the hectic multiplayer races. Great fun!
Fun fact: We regard the Micro Maniacs game for PSone to be one of the most underrated games ever!

88



8/10

MORTAL KOMBAT: DA

What makes it great: Its frantic 'blink and you'll lose an arm' pace, buckets of blood and pioneering new gore technology, with real-time bruising and bleeding after each gruesome hit.
Fun fact: The game allows players to switch between hand-to-hand combat and swordplay on the fly.

87



8/10

KINGDOM HEARTS

What makes it great: In spite of the Disney characters and settings that make it seem just for kids, Kingdom Hearts poses a surprisingly difficult yet rewarding challenge for RPG fans.
Fun fact: Sephiroth, the mysterious adversary from Final Fantasy VII makes an appearance as one of the bosses.

86



8/10

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FRONT

What makes it great: Despite ageing graphics, the intense campaigns and varied objectives make for a very playable package. You can even watch replays of your perfect missions.
Fun fact: One of the ads for Dropship featured a severed arm holding a copy of the game in its lifeless fingers. Charming...

85

lingerie party research



8/10

NHL 2004

What makes it great: The comprehensive Dynasty mode allows die-hard hockey fans to become the General Manager of their favourite team and lead them to greatness over 20 seasons, from signing crucial players to setting the ticket prices.
Fun fact: NHL 2004 reintroduces fighting to the series!

84



9/10

DARK CHRONICLE

What makes it great: While many RPGs concentrate their energies into destroying evil, very few also concentrate on rebuilding what evil has destroyed.
Fun fact: Dark Chronicle's predecessor, Dark Cloud, had a very quiet and very limited release in Australia.

83



8/10

AMPLITUDE

What makes it great: With diverse tracks, Amplitude is a music lover's dream. And the more rhythm games that don't involve lurching around can only be a good thing too.
Fun fact: Remixed tracks can be uploaded through the Network Gaming service for other gamers to appreciate.

82



9/10

MADDEN NFL 2004

What makes it great: Takes the complicated sport of American football, packs insane amounts of detail in, and then makes it easy to play – one of the best multiplayer sports games ever!
Fun fact: Madden games have appeared annually since John Madden Football on Mega Drive in 1990.

81



8/10

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

What made it great: Over 20 authentic ninja weapons, dozens of unique killing techniques and co-operative and versus multiplayer modes.
Fun fact: The team who worked on Wrath of Heaven used to work for such companies as SNK, Square and Capcom.

80



7/10

RYGAR

What makes it great: The famous Diskarmor-based gameplay shakes off the dust from the 8-bit age without skipping a beat. Heavily rooted in Greek myths and backed by a full orchestral soundtrack, Rygar is a compelling experience.
Fun fact: Hilarious dialogue like: 'Fight with me, fang of justice!'

79



ALBUMS WE WISHED WE'D NEVER BOUGHT

1. SCANDALOUS
2. MLI VANILI
3. JESSICA SIMPSON
4. TOFOG
5. HUMAN NATURE
6. SLAUGHTER
8. THE BULLET BOYS
9. DJ SAMMY



101 GREATEST PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES!



AUTO MODELLISTA

What makes it great: Cel shading might be a little overused but Auto Modellista looks fantastic and the tuning options and gameplay should satisfy even ardent Gran Turismo fans.
Fun fact: Some colours should never be seen, but Auto Modellista lets you slap all manner of paint jobs on your ride.

67



THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

What makes it great: It's slicker than the original Sims, and adds extra freedom for your little computer people. Being able to get out of the house means you'll be playing for even longer.
Fun fact: The Sims is the best-selling game series of all time, with every version released going to the top of the sales charts.

66



CLUB FOOTBALL

What makes it great: Up there with the FIFA titles for its gameplay, with the added interest of being able to buy an edition based around your favourite (international) team.
Fun fact: In the UK it was the Leeds United version that took top honours for selling the most copies.

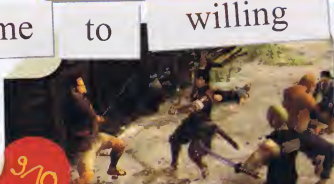
65



PROJECT ZERO

What makes it great: You're a prissy little girl going into a creepy, bloodstained old mansion armed with nothing but a camera. Add a well to the mix, and you have instant horror.
Fun fact: The mansion that you explore in Project Zero is based on an actual house in Japan – down to the smallest detail.

64



ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

What makes it great: Who doesn't like a samurai sword-fest? The beautiful environments, the compelling story, and dicing up ninjas make for an atmospheric and action-filled adventure.
Fun fact: Main character Jubel Yagyu's likeness is based on that of deceased Japanese actor Masadu Matsuda.

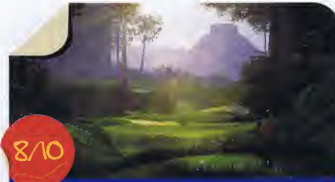
63



MUSIC 3000

What makes it great: All of the Music games are significant in bringing non-traditional elements into the gaming arena. This one is the best of the lot, with the most options of them all.
Fun fact: The music you create from this "software" can actually be burnt to CD (with a little ingenuity). Brilliant!

62



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

What makes it great: Loads and loads of real PGA courses, it's great fun in multiplayer or on your own, plus it's got the most detailed create-a-character option ever seen!
Fun fact: Unlike other sports stars like Colin McRae, Tiger's career hasn't fallen to bits since he's been doing the games.

61



WIPEOUT FUSION

What makes it great: It's a face-meltingly fast, futuristic rollercoaster of a racing game from a series that modern gaming owes more to than some people realise. Enough said.
Fun fact: Designer's Republic, the creators of the Pole Position games' futuristic logos, weren't involved with Fusion.

60

- WORST TV SHOWS EVER
1. HOME AND AWAY
 2. FULL HOUSE
 3. DINOSAURS
 4. BREAKERS
 5. PACIFIC HEIGHTS
 6. 7TH HEAVEN
 7. MY WIFE AND KIDS
 8. EXTREME MAKEOVERS
 3. THE RESORT



MIDWAYS ARCADE TREASURES

What makes it great: The other arcade classics are good fun but it's really about Root Beer Tapper – hands-down the best simulation of serving beer to rowdy drunks ever. Essential!
Fun fact: Originally called Budweiser Beer Tapper, the "Bud" had to be dropped from the name because of under-age drinking.

59



ESPN NHL HOCKEY

What makes it great: It features possibly the greatest presentation ever seen in a sports title. The graphics, controls and overall gameplay are all consistently brilliant.
Fun fact: ESPN NHL Hockey is fairly slim-like but it still has some fun mini-games thrown in such as Pond Hockey.

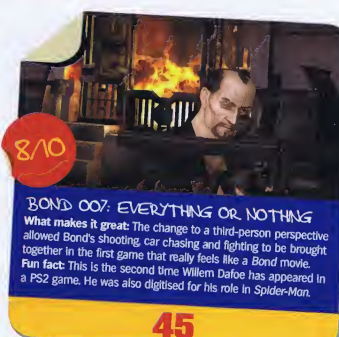
58



THE CRISIS 3

What makes it great: Namco's feverishly fast gunplay, cranked up a notch or 10. TC3 is one of the first shooting games to successfully integrate a weapon switching function.
Fun fact: Pulling off a perfect shooting spree is known as doing a "Richard Miller" (after the hero of the first Time Crisis game).

57



open

wide

101 GREATEST PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES!



8/10

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 1

What makes it great: As a single-player game, there are some nifty features. It's the multiplayer capabilities, though, that really blow everything else outta the water.
Fun fact: This game nearly didn't make it through, when developer Black Isle Studios folded.

44



8/10

THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

What makes it great: When it comes to GTA rip-offs they don't get any more blatant than this, but walking around a living and breathing Springfield is so much fun that you won't care.
Fun fact: The game is packed full of details for fans, like the playable Larry the Looter arcade game in the Kwik-E-Mart.

43

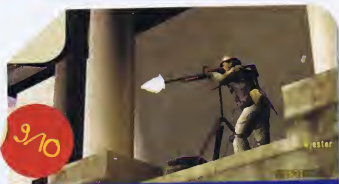


8/10

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL

What makes it great: Besides being the most realistic basketball sim out there, the game also features a 24/7 mode that runs off your PS2's internal clock.
Fun fact: The 24/7 mode was inspired by the use of the Game Cube's internal clock in Animal Crossing.

42



3/10

SOCOM: U.S. NAVY SEALS

What makes it great: Without a shadow of a doubt, the best Network Gaming title for the PS2. Unparalleled game modes and options mean the online warfare will rage for years.
Fun fact: Members of the development team were previously involved in creating training software for the US Military.

41



8/10

MANHUNT

What makes it great: The sheer unbridled savagery and the fact you are, in essence, the star of a snuff movie. Any game that gives this kind of brutality is destined to be a cult favourite.
Fun fact: Brian Cox (X-Men 2) provides the creepy voice-over for Starkweather, one of the most evil characters ever.

40



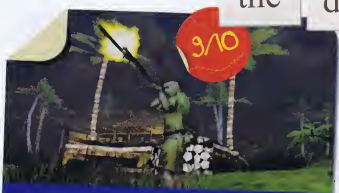
8/10

VIRTUA TENNIS 2

What makes it great: Simple gameplay that turns two-player matches into pure tests of skill, plus the huge World Tour mode provides a fantastic one-player challenge.
Fun fact: Poor old Scud was dumped from the first Virtua Tennis game to make way for compatriot Pat Rafter.

39

the dumb ed it or kiss ed a horse



3/10

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

What makes it great: Whether you're escaping a sinking ship in Pearl Harbour or sabotaging the bridge over the River Kwai, Rising Sun delivers.
Fun fact: The Rising Sun team travelled to South-east Asia and tested authentic WWII weapons for maximum realism.

38



8/10

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

What makes it great: Apart from Baldur's Gate 1 & 2, Champions is probably the best multiplayer adventure game ever. Slashing your way through dungeons with a mate? Yes! ever. Slashing your way through dungeons with a mate? Yes! ever. Slashing your way through dungeons with a mate? Yes! ever.
Fun fact: The creators of Champions actually created the original Baldur's Gate but didn't come back for the sequel.

37



3/10

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

What makes it great: An amazingly intuitive, super-deep fighting system that uses three buttons in the best possible way so that fights are all based on reactions rather than memory.
Fun fact: Evolution adds two characters to the regular edition, as well as a whole chunk of PS2-exclusive features.

36



8/10

THE THING

What makes it great: The fact that it starts almost exactly where the 1982 John Carpenter sci-fi/horror classic ended. A must for fans of the movie.
Fun fact: John Carpenter recently went on record saying how much he admired this survival horror classic.

35



8/10

ROCKY

What makes it great: The boxing action is the best yet seen - it's deep, easy-to-play and, most importantly, loads of fun. Plus the classic movie characters are far cooler than real-life boxers!
Fun fact: The only movie character missing from the game is Hulk Hogan's 'Thunderlips' from Rocky III.

34

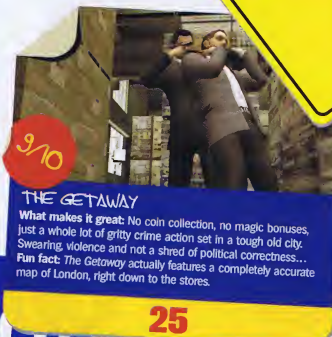
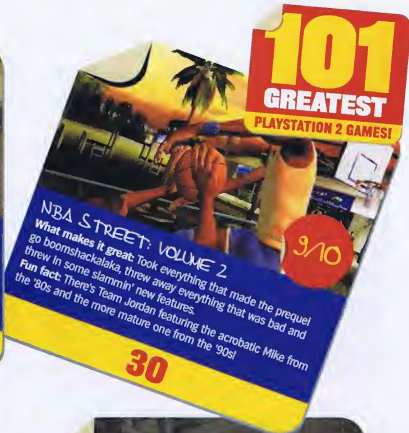


3/10

LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

What makes it great: Gorgeous and packed to the gills with sword-swinging action. It's as close as it gets to being in the movie without having to go to New Zealand.
Fun fact: Released before the film hit cinemas, fans had the chance to ruin the movie without reading the book.

33



101 GREATEST PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES!



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4

What makes it great: A simulation that's so accurate you could close your eyes and describe the consistency of the gravel just from the sound. Don't even get us started on the handling.
Fun fact: McRae was licensed because he was the rally champ but by CMR4 he was being consistently thrashed.

20



TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

What makes it great: Its lack of originality saw it labelled by some as simply GTA: LA, but the addition of intense John Woo-style shootouts make this a brilliant, if brief, roller coaster ride.
Fun fact: This game had a great cast including Christopher Walken, Gary Oldman and Michael Madsen.

19



SILENT HILL 3

What makes it great: It raises the bar for the horror genre, providing a truly disturbing, frightening and bloody experience.
Fun fact: Silent Hill 3 is actually a direct sequel to the first. Silent Hill game, revealing more about the cult and characters that featured in the original classic on PSone.

18



WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE I COME!

What makes it great: With uncanny likenesses to the superstars, HICP manages to capture the spectacle of the big WWE pay-per-views. Bra and Panty Matches rock!
Fun fact: Brock Lesnar misjudged at Wrestlemania XIX, landed his 380-pound frame on his head and suffered concussion.

17



RATCHET & CLANK: UP TO YOU

What makes it great: The sheer number of the gadgets and crazy weapons alone would make this game worth playing. The furry dude's hilarious antics are a bonus.
Fun fact: Mark Cerny, significant contributor to Ratchet & Clank, it was tipped to win the IGDA Lifetime Achievement Award.

16



X-MEN: THE MOVIE

What makes it great: The graphics actually use cel shading to great effect (for one of the only times ever). You feel as if you've wandered into a three-dimensional comic book.
Fun fact: The game is actually based on a graphic novel from Belgium. Talk about obscure source material!

15



NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

What makes it great: The deliciously addictive drag racing is worth the asking price alone; aneurysm-inducing speed has rarely been this convincingly realised.
Fun fact: Excelling in Underground mode will unlock a handful of special vehicles, including the Rob Zombie car.

14



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

What makes it great: For the first time ever, commanding squads and third-person shooting is so easy you won't even notice you're doing it.
Fun fact: To avoid tackling the sticky terrorism situation, the game sees America at war with the USSR in an alternate future.

13



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

What makes it great: A huge Vice City-style playing area with more extreme skating and loads more missions to work through than previous Hawk games. And they were fantastic enough already!
Fun fact: Mike V, Underground's new character, has known Tony for decades. They are Bones Brigade team mates from the '80s.

12



PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME

What makes it great: It captures everything that made the original a classic and combines it with slick graphics, smooth gameplay and a hot chick to fight alongside you.
Fun fact: Sands of Time is actually a prequel to the original Prince of Persia, which was created in 1989.

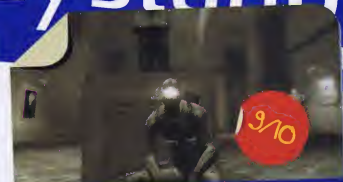
11



BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

What makes it great: Shattering glass, tearing metal and showers of sparks erupt regularly in the most amazing crashes you've ever seen. The multiplayer modes are genius.
Fun fact: The first Burnout was originally going to be called Shiny Red Car, until the developer realised that was whack!

10



TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

What makes it great: The level of immersion the game creates. The stealth combined with the shadowy environs truly add up to an involving experience. Plus the gadgets rock!
Fun fact: Michael Ironside (Starship Troopers) provided the gravely voice of Sam Fisher.

9

8/10



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3
What makes it great: It's hands-down one of the best multi-player games to have ever been created. The most detailed, flowing recreation of soccer... ever!
Fun fact: Before they were allowed to use "real" names, the game used to feature players like Vidooka and Kewill.

8



GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC
What makes it great: The ultimate realism of the 150+ cars – each made up of more than 4000 polygons – makes GT3 THE racing sim. If you weren't playing it, you'd swear it was real.
Fun fact: A special edition of GT3 was released in Japan and played inside modified cars.

7



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE
What makes it great: 350+ VR missions and 150+ alternate missions allows for more time playing as Snake and less as pretty boy Raiden, plus there's less boring COOP conversations.
Fun fact: David Hayter, the voice of Solid Snake, also says "EA Sports: It's in the game!" at the beginning of EA's games.

6

REMEMBER TO INVITE TO BBQ
 1. KERA KNIGHTLEY
 2. MERRICK AND ROSSO
 3. UMA THURMAN
 4. BIG, FAT OBNOXIOUS FANCE
 5. ALYSSA MILANO
 6. WILL FERRELL
 7. BEYONCE KNOWLES
 8. PERRY FARRELL
 9. GARY COLEMAN
 10. REBECCA HOWE



THE SUFFERERS 2
What makes it great: The fastest, smoothest first-person shooter ever, complete with masses of challenges and link-up support for up to 16 players at once!
Fun fact: Developer Free Radical comprises team members from the gang who made GoldenEye on Nintendo 64.

5



DEVIL MAY CRY 2
What makes it great: Capcom abandoned Resident Evil's slow pace in favour of a hero packin' guns, a never-ending supply of ammo and the ability to transform into a lightning-tossing devil.
Fun fact: The game was originally made as Resident Evil 4 but Capcom decided it was too different and reworked it.

4

chase my mum



JAK 2: RENEGADE
What makes it great: Infusing GTA-style gameplay into the Jak & Daxter world has made this the first platformer that appeals to both infants and adults alike.
Fun fact: Naughty Dog was famous for its Crash Bandicoot games but sold the rights to Universal for a fat wad of cash.

3



GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE PACK
What makes it great: Okay, we admit it – we copped out. We couldn't pick whether Grand Theft Auto III or GTA: Vice City should be at number one, but we knew that they would definitely make up the top two positions. So we've put the recent Double Pack re-release at the top, as it contains what are the two best-ever PlayStation 2 titles.
 GTA III is certainly the most groundbreaking game of recent years, and has changed the face of videogames forever. Vice City then added and expanded on its predecessor's brilliance in almost every way. The open-ended gameplay, the feeling of freedom, being able to play as a bad-ass mobster, the abundance of non-stop, rip-roaring out-and-out FUN in both games is mind-boggling, the variety of missions and the abundance of on-foot, rip-roaring out-and-out FUN in both games is mind-boggling, the variety of missions and the abundance of on-foot, rip-roaring out-and-out FUN in both games is mind-boggling.
 You can choose which of the two is your own personal favourite, but either way you absolutely MUST own and play them both (providing you're over the age of 15, of course...!) All hail the mighty GTA – king of PlayStation 2 games!
Fun fact: Scottish developer Rockstar North used to be called DMA Design and was responsible for the classic puzzle game Lemmings many years ago. Quite different from the games it's making these days!

1



SOUL CALIBUR II
What makes it great: It's the easiest fighting game to get into, but to be truly great will take years! The characters, weapons and the mind-blowing special moves are second to none.
Fun fact: Soul Calibur II competition is so fierce in PS2 Towers, some members even bet their wages on fights!

2



Sky's the limit

WORDS: NARAYAN PATTISON

Square Enix is leaving traditional RPGs behind and taking to the skies with its ambitious dragon-riding epic, Drakengard



Caim rides one of the leftover props from the *Final Fantasy* movie



THE A-TEAM

Look back at the previous titles the *Drakengard* team has worked on and you'll notice that they're almost exclusively action games. Many of the developers are from Namco, having worked on the *Moto GP*, *Ace Combat* and *Ridge Racer* games. A few have even come from Capcom's *Resident Evil* and *Dino Crisis* teams. Taking such an action-heavy team of talent and putting them to work on an action-RPG hybrid was no easy task. Originally the title was going to play very much like *Panzer Dragoon*. It was only part-way into the development phase that the idea to incorporate the on-foot battles was added.



How do you please both action and RPG fans at the same time? "With a lot of hard work," was the answer Square Enix gave. The company has established itself as the most successful RPG developer in the world. With more than 200,000 units sold in Australia during the last five years, the *Final Fantasy* franchise has taken RPGs out of the domain of import shops and turned them into a mainstream success.

Now that Square Enix has conquered the RPG market, it's gone to work on developing a title that will appeal to action junkies as well as its RPG fans. An ambitious task, yes, but if any company can pull it off, it will be Square Enix. *OPS2* flew over to Tokyo for an incredible couple of days and an exclusive look at this exciting project.

Drakengard fuses together the flight-based dragon combat of *Panzer Dragoon*, *Dynasty Warriors*' style of slashing your way through entire squads of soldiers and the epic story and levelling-up of characters seen in the *Final Fantasy* games. Whether or not it can deliver an adventure that appeals to two completely different audiences remains to be seen but the game sure has a lot of the right ingredients.

The Empire Strikes Back

Events kick off when Caim, the game's hero, wakes up one morning to find his parents murdered and his sister

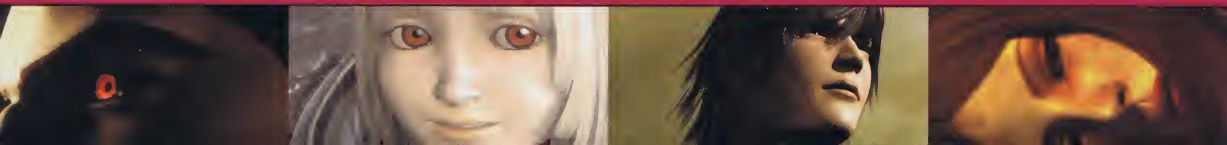
kidnapped by the Empire. No, it wasn't Darth Vader looking for another Rebel base. This Empire is an army rampaging through a fictional medieval Europe. Being a prince of the opposing army, the Union, Caim takes his big hair-do and his even bigger sword on a rescue mission.

At this stage you could be forgiven for thinking this sounds like a paint-by-numbers 'save the princess' RPG plot, but it doesn't take long before the twists start popping up. Twist One: while fighting his way through the castle where his sister is being held, Caim finds himself mortally wounded and mere minutes away from death. Twist Two: while staggering around bleeding, Caim encounters an imprisoned dragon. In order to save themselves, Caim and the dragon form a life pact, fusing their souls together and strengthening them both – this is the fantasy bit, guys, cut them some slack. Twist Three: we discover that Caim isn't really that fussed about saving his sister or avenging his parents. Caim is driven purely by hate and is single-mindedly obsessed with crushing the Empire's regime.

The bulk of the game's action takes place in the skies, with Caim riding on the dragon's back. While controlling the dragon you have complete freedom to fly where you want – unlike the on-rails nature of the flight in Sega's *Panzer Dragoon*. Caim's dragon can hock up nasty fireballs at will and spit them in any direction too. ➔



Watch out kids, this is what happens if you don't wear sunscreen



Drakengard

TRENDY TATTOOS

As a symbol of the bond between the warrior and his pact animal, both of them sport one of these stylish pact tattoos. It's sort of like how Johnny Depp got Winona Forever tattooed on his arm. But we doubt Caim will be rushing to the nearest plastic surgeon to have it lasered off like Depp did after having a lovers tiff with his dragon. If Caim ditched the tattoo his bond with the dragon will be broken and he'll be in more trouble than Winona Ryder's career after that unfortunate shoplifting incident.



→ Sometimes you'll be tackling giant flying fortresses but fully-fledged dragon fights are also on the cards.

After setting fire to everything in the sky it's time to turn your attention to the troops on the ground. Caim and his dragon can engage entire platoons of troops by going into a sort of strafing mode that allows the dragon to sweep left and right, showering the soldiers with flames and roasting them faster than a marshmallow on a bonfire.

Not wanting to let his dragon to hog all the action, Caim can land at any time, whip out his sword and carve up the opposition. Caim's sword needs to be big because he'll often find himself tackling 10 to 15 soldiers at once. The RPGness comes into play here, with Caim searching around the environments for new weapons. The more each weapon is used, the more damage it delivers and the greater its physical size becomes. Each weapon also has magical powers that

sequences. After pioneering the latest in rotting flesh technology with *Resident Evil*, Kazuya Sasahara leads the CG team on *Drakengard*. Taking inspiration from the epic battle scenes in the *Lord of the Rings* movies, many of *Drakengard's* battles involve thousands of soldiers crashing against enemy frontlines.

What you won't be used to from previous Square Enix titles though, is the sheer level of gore used in the brutal fight scenes. Limbs roll, heads fly and buckets and buckets of blood splash about.

In fact, *Drakengard* was so violent it had to be modified before it could be released. 'Japan' and 'censorship' were two words no one would have expected to see in the same sentence a couple of years ago. Japanese cartoons (anime) and videogames have had a reputation as being the most violent in the world, but the country's tough

"CAIM CAN ENGAGE ENTIRE PLATOONS, SHOWERING THE SOLDIERS WITH FLAMES"

can be upgraded, like shooting fireballs or enhancing Caim's speed. Caim can also augment his own strength and life bar as he gains more experience.

While it is up to you when you want to use your dragon and when you want to go on foot, there are some gameplay elements that will force you to abandon your dragon. Some enemies have special fire-resistant armour that will mean the dragon is useless against them, and some weapons are hidden inside castles that Caim must explore alone.

Adding another dose of RPG styling to the action, there are three other playable characters who join Caim on his quest. The other warriors have their own weapons they can upgrade and, more importantly, their own animals they have life pacts with. One of the animals we saw was a giant golem that could pound his way through the enemy ranks.

Video nasties

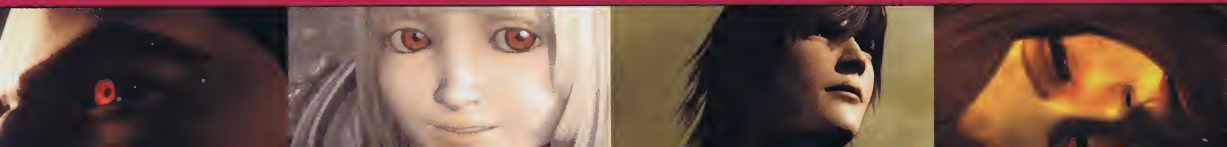
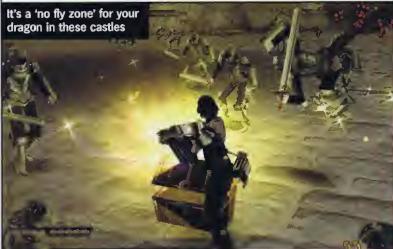
Despite expecting first-rate CG video sequences, Square Enix still managed to floor us with the stunning new battle

new stance on censorship caused some of the bloodier scenes to be cut. When questioned about this, the development team admitted that they saw the need for censorship. However, they also said the belief that violent games lead to violent behaviour is nonsense and that they felt the censorship board's stance is out of touch.

So there you have it. An anti-hero hell-bent on taking down a government, intense dragon-based combat, more blood than a vampire's liquor cabinet and a whooping great sword – all leading towards five unique endings, depending on how you play the game. If these ingredients don't get action junkies and RPG fans shaking hands and leaving their differences behind, we don't know what will. **JB**

FAMILIAR FACE

The only dragon story since *Puff the Magic Dragon* worth getting hot about was *Dragonheart*. The tale of a brave knight and a dragon working together because they are bound by a promise has a lot of parallels with *Drakengard*. Although the game was not directly based on the film, we can't help but feel that the developers were influenced by the visual style and the main themes. Let's hope the game turns out to be more like *Dragonheart* and less like the straight-to-video sequel.



 **TOM CLANCY'S**



RAINBOW SIX[®] 3

**THE MOST INTENSE CLOSE
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Play cooperatively in split screen or with up to 6 players online



Handle an arsenal of more than 30 high spec realistic weapons



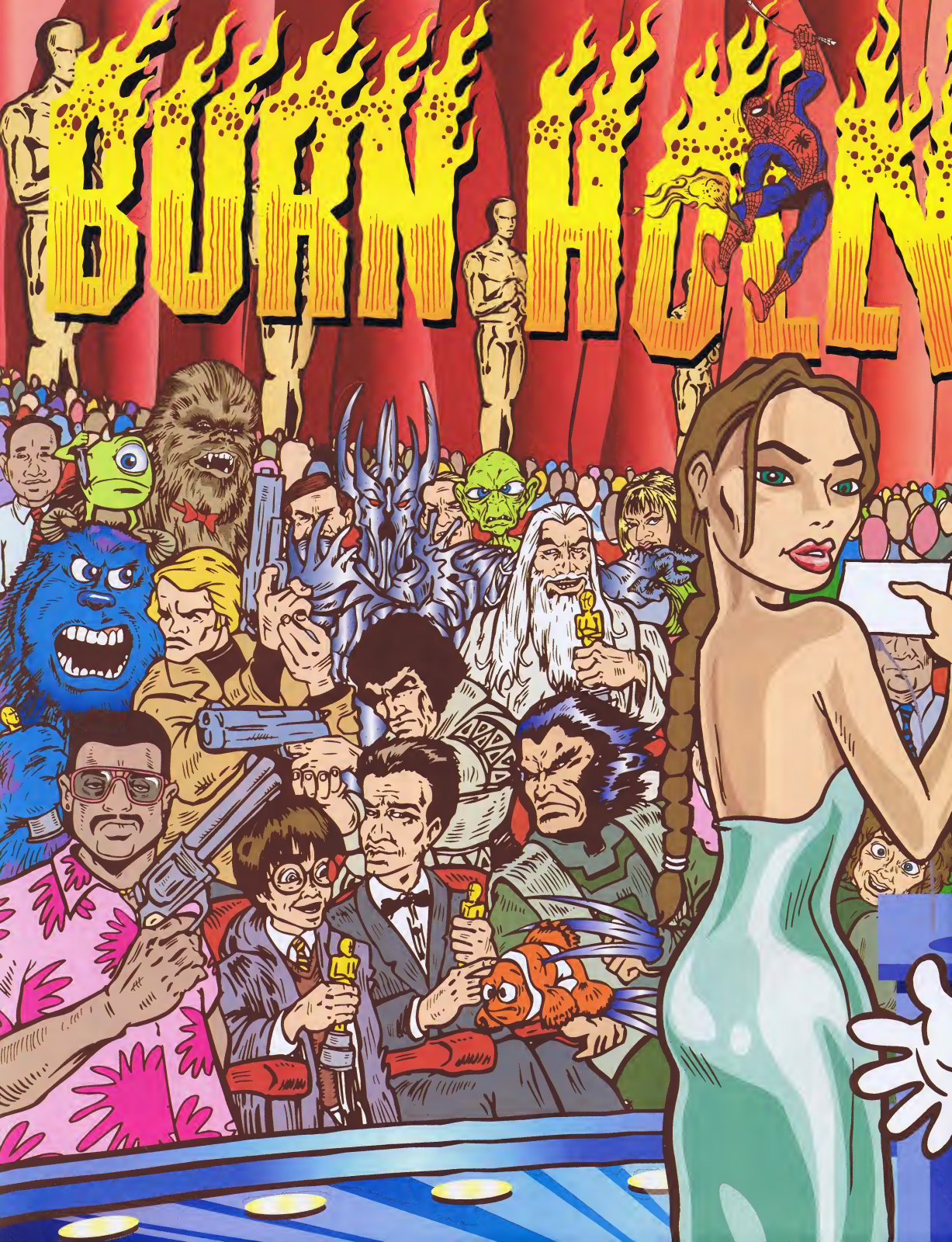
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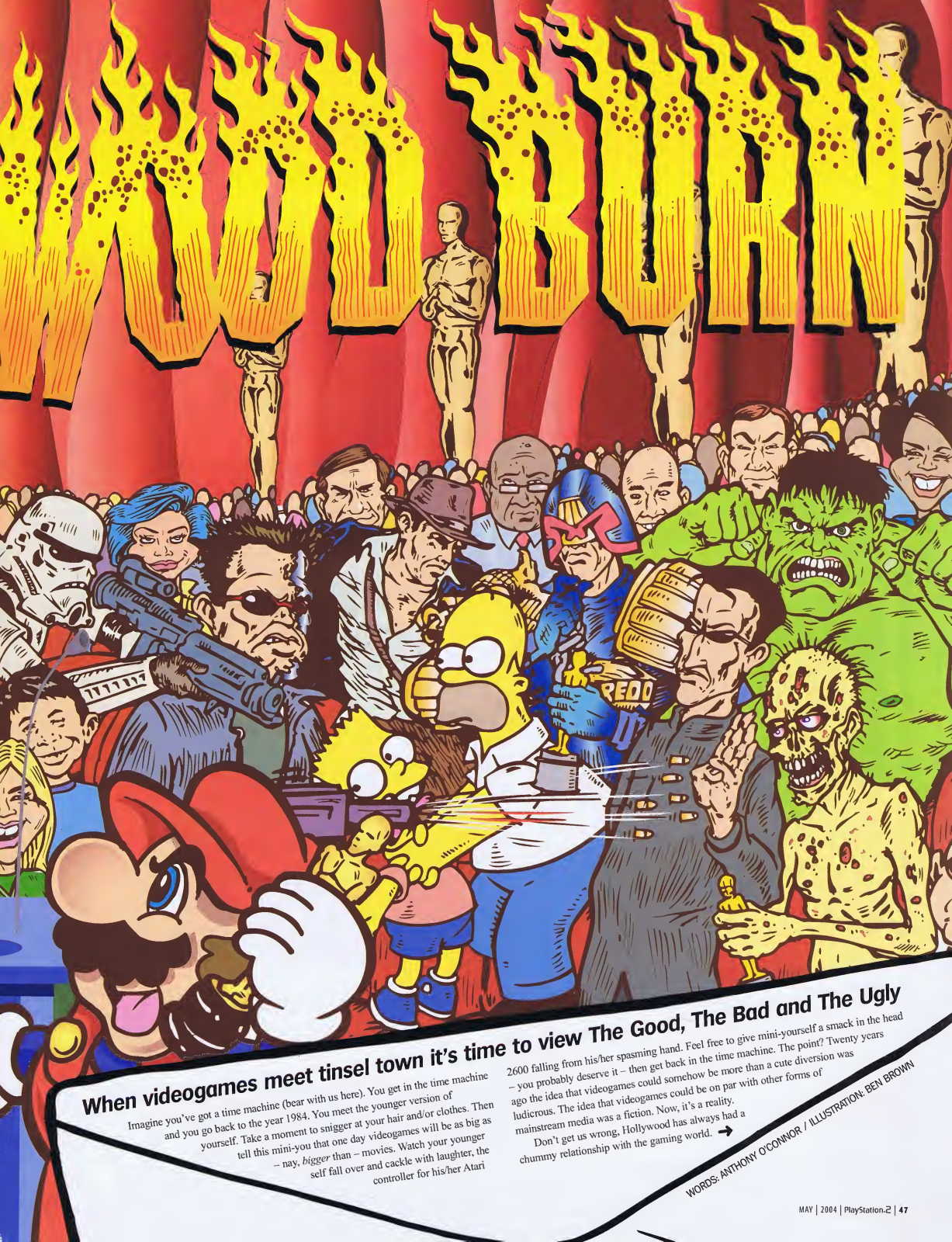
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When videogames meet tinsel town it's time to view *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*

Imagine you've got a time machine (bear with us here). You get in the time machine and you go back to the year 1984. You meet the younger version of yourself. Take a moment to snigger at your hair and/or clothes. Then tell this mini-you that one day videogames will be as big as – nay, bigger than – movies. Watch your younger self fall over and cackle with laughter, the controller for his/her Atari

2600 falling from his/her spasming hand. Feel free to give mini-yourself a smack in the head – you probably deserve it – then get back in the time machine. The point? Twenty years ago the idea that videogames could somehow be more than a cute diversion was ludicrous. The idea that videogames could be on par with other forms of mainstream media was a fiction. Now, it's a reality. Don't get us wrong, Hollywood has always had a chummy relationship with the gaming world. →

WORDS: ANTHONY O'CONNOR / ILLUSTRATION: BEN BROWN

→ Games, for a long time, were an extension of the usual marketing tools for Hollywood. Time and time again mediocre titles were brought out with little or no resemblance to the movies upon which they were allegedly based. But the difference between, say, the Commodore 64 version of *Batman: The Movie* and what we're toying with now is huge.

We live in a world where *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* can top a blockbuster movie like *Gladiator* in terms of profit. Now, certainly there's a big difference between a game, but the bottom line speaks for itself: Videogames are now big, BIG business.

Even more than that, though, games have had a profound influence on Hollywood and vice versa. Just look at movies like *The Matrix* (the original, not the two sequels that are best left alone) where camera techniques like "Bullet Time" have become a

regular feature of games (like *Max Payne* and *Blood Rayne*). But also would *The Matrix* ever have existed without the major influence of gamer culture on society? Probably not.

Like it or not, games and movies are getting closer and closer thematically and aesthetically. In this feature we take a look at some of the movies that became games, games that became movies and some that perhaps *should* get the tie-in treatment. So get your bucket of buttered popcorn, loosen your strides, kick back and watch the show...

THE GOOD

Good games based on movies or good movies based on games are few and far between. There are certainly good movies that use the general themes of videogames, like *Tron* or David Cronenberg's *Existenz*. There are also videogames that use cinematic themes and styling to great success (*GTA3* and *Manhunt*) but somehow in direct tie-ins the magic is normally lost. The following comprises a list of some of the better hits in this disappointingly anorexic category.

MOVIES TO GAMES



The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers and The Return of the King

Based on the world-changing Peter Jackson movies these games actually featured the voice talents of the movie actors and managed to expand on the movie's material without getting silly and adding whole levels of "giant squirrels of doom" or similar. *ROTK* in particular is a worthy conversion, taking the conventions of hack 'n' slash to a whole new level of excellence. If only all movie conversions were this faithful.

The Thing

Based on John Carpenter's little-appreciated but absolutely brilliant 1982 horror flick, *The Thing* managed to capture the feel of the movie without bastardizing the source material. The game, basically a survival horror, takes place directly after the movie ends. You're one of an elite team of military dudes who search the creepy, dark Antarctic research station for survivors... and soon find a creepy, shape-changing alien menace that can take on the form of anyone or anything. What really sets this title apart from the pack is the unique trust-based system, where your teammates freak out if they believe you're *The Thing*. You must keep them happy (with weapons, health kits and firm pats on the bottom) or they may turn on you. Inversely, of course, they may be *The Thing* and could require some brisk flamethrower therapy! A great game - fingers crossed for a sequel.

GoldenEye

It doesn't really have a lot to do with the Bond flick of the same name but managed to keep many a gamer happy on the Nintendo 64, even though



they didn't have any other games to play on the system. This first-person shooter combined stealth with standard run-and-gun shooting, and featured great multiplayer modes. The clever chaps who churned out this title went on to make the *TimeSplitters* games.

GAMES THAT TIME FORGOT

We're all familiar with the games based on blockbuster movies. Most of us, over the years, have forked over our cash for games based on good movies that turned out to be, well, not so good. However, film licenses aren't only comprised of blockbusters. Check out some of these more obscure games-of-movies: *Zombie* (the Italian name for George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*). A well intentioned but dodgy zombie game, *Nightmare on Elm St.* (Fright of the 13th, *Labyrinth* the David Bowie one with Jennifer Connolly and Muppets), *Platoon* (because when the machine breaks down, we break down!), *Flosh Gordon*, *Blues Brothers*, *Hudson Hawk* (crap movie but an okay game) and more.



Spider-Man

Okay, so it's not a perfect game and really diverges from the movie in many places but it's an undeniable thrill to use your webs and swing around New York. The fact you can also replay the whole game as the Green Goblin is very cool too. A sequel is due out to coincide with the next Sam Raimi-directed cinematic effort, so web-heads stay cool!

GAMES TO MOVIES



Resident Evil

Hardly a genre-defining classic and frankly not fit to lick the booties of *Dawn of the Dead* or similar, *Resident Evil* nonetheless managed to capture the look and feel of the Capcom survival horror series. Due for the sequel treatment later this year and featuring the lovely Milla Jovovich, *Res Evil* is certainly worth a rental for fans of the game.



Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

On one hand this entirely CGI-animated movie seems to have, well, absolutely *nothing* to do with the *Final Fantasy* games, but it was nonetheless revolutionary when it came out. A CGI movie that didn't feature talking toys or zany bugs? What a concept. It looks a bit dated these days but it's still a worthy effort (especially with the vocal talents of Steve Buscemi and James Woods).

THE BAD

Let's face it — most movies based on games, or vice versa, suck. In the case of games based on movies we've had to play about 600 too many dodgy tie-ins. What is it about the tie-in that seems to breed such an apathetic attitude towards quality? Perhaps the misguided notion that the movie's name alone will be enough to sell the game? In the following collection we don't focus so much on every bad movie tie-in (we'd be here all day) but rather the ones that had potential and just wasted it for no good reason. On the other hand, movies that are based on games offer us a much richer palette of crap. We've chosen some of the creamier mounds in that wretched crop.



NOTE-WORTHY MENTIONS THAT WOULDN'T FIT

The "Good" section is by no means a complete list. There are many other, slightly lesser games that are still pretty tidy. The Hulk (suffers from repetitive gameplay and enemies that respawn, but it's still a lot less slow and ponderous than the movie), Hudson Hawk (an almost insanely bad movie but this little platform effort for the Amiga 500 was actually pretty good — for the time. One of the very few examples of a bad movie that made a good game), Predator (for the Commodore 64 — okay, so it wasn't that good but it was one of the few movie tie-ins of the era that actually remained faithful to the source material).

MOVIES TO GAMES

Star Wars

In High School, *Star Wars* was voted "Most likely to make a kick-arse game!" by its peers. However, all that glitters is not gold and *Star Wars* has time and time again managed to spawn average or downright awful games. The only time *Star Wars* seems to excel is when the games are based loosely on the *SW* universe rather than specific entries in the series. It wasn't always this way, either. The original *Star Wars* arcade game was quite good for the day and the Super Nintendo had some nice entries based on the trilogy. Somewhere along the way, however, something went wrong. Possibly around the same time George Lucas said "I've got a great idea for a character. I'll call him... Jar Jar!"



Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle

Okay, the movie wasn't exactly a world-beater but it was fun and easy on the eye. The same cannot, unfortunately, be said for the game. Bad graphics? Check. Appalling controls? Yep. Pointless fighting that at no point manages to achieve even "vaguely enjoyable" status? Yes, it's all here. This is the kind of game that harkens back to the dodgy tie-ins of yesteryear — a time that is best consigned to hazy memory.



WHAT ABOUT THE TELLYP

Television shows are basically Hollywood's dumber cousin when it comes to videogames. Most telly-based properties are piles of horse rectum: *Knight Rider*, *Dukes of Hazzard*, *Starsky and Hutch* (okay, the last one wasn't that bad but it wasn't great either) but one has to wonder though, what else could be made from the telly? Welcome back *Kotter* (take on the role of Mr. Kotter and teach a bunch of inner city kids the value of an education. Possibly features some ninjas and killer squirrels later on. "You know, for the kids"). *Jackass* (take part in a bunch of insanely stupid stunts. Including snorting Wasabi and jumping in giant vats of rotten oil, so you get the maximum "dickhead bonus").



PORN TO BE MILD

One genre of "cinema" that has been left out in the cold in terms of the tie-in treatment is that of the champion porno. Now we're not condoning or recommending pornography as such, but surely for games to evolve as an art form they need to do so on all genres. We won't go into too many details about how PS2 porn games could work (especially after *Vice City* was snipped and clipped for the Aussie market) but it has to be admitted – it's an intriguing concept. One which perhaps needs further investigation...



Evil Dead: Hail to the King & Fistful of Boomstick

Sam Raimi's brilliant demonic horror/comedy trilogy is brought to the PSone and PS2. Uber-geek fave Bruce Campbell is on board to voice his seminal character Ash. All the pieces are in place. Oh, but they forgot to make a good game. Twice! Admittedly *Fistful of Boomstick* has its moments but the fact this cult classic of a trilogy doesn't have better tie-in is simply criminal.

Akira

Defining anime classic... gets turned into a pinball game! 'Nuff said.



Aliens

Certainly the *Aliens* vs. *Predator* games were good (although, ironically, not based on the upcoming movie) but *Alien*, *Aliens*, *Alien 3* and *Alien: Resurrection* have not been treated well in the world of games. It's strange that such a brilliant movie franchise would yield such poor results. The *Alien 3* Amiga game was pretty ordinary and the *Resurrection* tie-in on PSone was just plain bad. Strangely *Aliens* on the Commodore 64 is remembered with a lot of affection. However, we were young then and probably didn't know any better.

GAMES TO MOVIES

Tomb Raider

There are two reasons to see the movie based on the platform adventure and they're both attached to Ms. Jolie's chest. Not to be too blunt, but this movie (and in fact its sequel) are a perfect example of "post content" movie making. No plot, no point, no reason to see it. Some hardcore *Croft* fans do tout these flicks as good. They're in denial. Avoid at all costs.

Super Mario Brothers

"Yeah, see, it's about these plumbers. Yeah, okay, and they jump around and break stuff... with their heads! We'll get Bob Hoskins to play one. There'll be cute dragons and big monsters and, you know, *jumping plumbers!* How can we lose...? Hello...? Hello?"



Mortal Kombat

Take a game with very little plot and lots of gore. Make it into a movie with very little plot and *no* gore. Add a pinch of a decent soundtrack but throw in a handful of dreadful actors and *do not* include a script. Mix. Eat. Regurgitate. Repeat.

AUSSIE PROPERTIES

It seems vaguely criminal to us here that more Australian movies have not been given the videogame treatment. The following list comprises some Aussie flicks we reckon would make great games.



MAD MAX 1 & 2: Surely in this day and age we could have a *Mad Max* game. Yes there's been *Carnage* and *Twisted Metal* but frankly we want something that has the real taint of Aussie on it! We want the *Maxi* A GTA-style adventure would be the best but we'd settle for dodgy. Let's face it: Fast cars and explosions in a post-apocalyptic world never goes out of style!

BAD BOY BUBBY: Take on the role of Bubby as you are let out of a basement and see the outside world for the first time... in your mid-forties. Features incest, dead cats and graphic violence. Certainly not a game to keep the whole family happy but a cult fave definitely.

GALLIPOLI: How about an Australian war game? Same principal as *Medal of Honor* but with that uniquely Aussie style to it. Storm the beaches. Shoot the enemy. Have a beer. "What are your legs?" "Steel springs, sir..."

Street Fighter: The Movie

Possibly one of the worst films of all time (right up there with *Judge Dredd* and *Speed 2*). Any movie that makes you look at *Mortal Kombat* with fond nostalgia is obviously a real turkey. The fact that it's possibly Jean-Claude Van Damme's worst movie, also, should clue you into the fact this ain't *Citizen Kane*. A movie based on a fighting game is not going to be an Oscar nominee but this incoherent mess made the videogame upon which it's based look like Shakespeare. Notable only for its breathtaking badness and our own Kyles playing a butt-kicking vixen. Want to redefine your definition of "suck", then watch this abomination – otherwise run away!



THE HYPOTHETICAL



Ever thought to yourself "That movie would make a great game" or "This game would be a sweet movie"? We have too. Often. In fact, it's safe to say we've spent a scary amount of time considering such issues. Hence the following list...

"THIS MOVIE WOULD MAKE A GREAT GAME!"



Night of the Living Dead

Taking over from survival horror titles like *Resident Evil*, *Night...* is something quite unique. It combines the stat-building elements of something like *The Sims* (ie, you reinforce your house, make sure booby traps are set) with the blood and guts action that you would come to expect from such a title. Gather a team of friends. Make sure they're all happy and not infected. Dispose of anyone who is bitten. Make sure you shoot your enemies in the head and watch out for hordes of wandering, drunken rednecks. They shoot first and ask questions later, giving a whole new meaning to the expression "You're not from around here are you, boy?"



The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

Although it had already been done way back in the '80s this new offering from Rockstar has to be their most controversial game yet. Take on the role of Leatherface, a serial killer with a love of chainsaws and masks made out of human skin. Make sure your victims are trapped. Make sure your skin masks are always moist. Make sure your chainsaw is always gassed and ready. Even better than *Jeffrey Dahmer: Pinball Wizard*!

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy

Alright, we know this isn't a movie *per se* but we feel that the game can't be far off and want to beat the rest of the pack to the scoop. Take on the role of The Fab Five as you try to turn straight men from tragic to fabulous! Watch as nacho cheese-stained AC/DC shirts are swapped for nice silk vests with perfect stitching. Quick, wiggle the left analogue stick to get a "Camp bonus"! The *OPS2* office alone is ripe for the fixing!

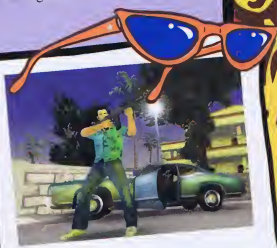
"MOVIES OF THESE PLEASE!"

Max Payne

Payne is a tough cop on the edge... way out on the edge. He's mean, uncompromising and ever since his family was brutally slaughtered he just doesn't seem to care any more. Except about one thing: Revenge! Johnny Depp stars as Payne in this taut psychological action thriller by director Brian (Scarface) De Palma. Warning: Features graphic violence, excessive painkiller use and overlong dream sequences that are *really* frustrating.

Half-Life

This new horror/sci-fi/thriller from director John (Halloween, The Thing) Carpenter is a return to great form. James Woods stars as a haggard action-scientist who must escape from a massive research facility where experiments have gone awry and monsters from different dimensions are running amok! Co-starring Morgan Freeman as "Panicky Scientist" and Keanu Reeves as "The crate that Woody hits with a crowbar for no apparent reason" this fright flick will be sure to excite even the most jaded of moviegoers.




GRAND THEFT CINEMA

Grand Theft Auto, although not technically based on any specific film property, is probably the most cinematically aware game series of all time. Combining elements from all the great crime movies, GTA3 and Vice City managed to carve their own identity in the hearts and minds of millions of gamers. What sets the GTA sub-genre (because essentially that's what it is) apart from the numerous other crime-themed games is its unapologetic anti-social sense of humour. Such a subversive element in a videogame is almost unheard of, and one has to suppose that when games start to subvert the norm the medium has truly come of age.



Grand Theft Auto

Martin Scorsese directs this controversial offering with a script by Quentin Tarantino. This movie's influence is so tangible people forget if they're playing a game, watching a movie or living their real lives and consequently wander into traffic muttering "It's okay, I have a bullet-proof vest". Thousands die. Millions more are confused as to why tanks aren't falling from the sky. "But I entered the cheat!" they are heard to mutter. Eventually the movie is banned everywhere except for New Zealand. It's a strange world. 



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Sniper position

Point ambush



Covering fire

Know your new battleground

You'll need every strategic advantage you can find in the new urban combat zones of **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs**. Play single player or online as a team with up to 16 players. Either way, a SOCOM-compatible headset or the new USB headset (for PlayStation®2) will help you communicate and work together as a team to survive. www.socom2-game.com



SOCOM II

U.S. NAVY SEALs

PlayStation 2

PLAY-TEST

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **Champion**

REVIEW CHARTER

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE'S reviews are the best in the business. Our crack squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone else. And we absolutely love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion rather than a few cheap gags and some PR nonsense. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here and overseas. What's more, our writers have plenty of 'heritage' in the industry, having a collective history spanning into decades. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

Next time you head off to spend your hard-earned cash on a PlayStation 2 game, make sure you read our reviews first.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

- 10/10** Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever.
- 09/10** A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now.
- 08/10** Highly recommended.
- 07/10** Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look.
- 06/10** Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre.
- 05/10** An average game.
- 04/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment.
- 03/10** Extremely disappointing.
- 02/10** To be avoided.
- 01/10** Beer mat.

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

DVD / MUSIC / MEDIA
media

DVD RELEASES

74

Matrix Revolutions/Welcome to the Jungle/
Wonderland/The Italian Job



TRANSFORMERS

54

Finally! A game based on the robots in disguise. And it's made in Australia!

PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

58

Could this really be the scariest game of all time? Get the official verdict!

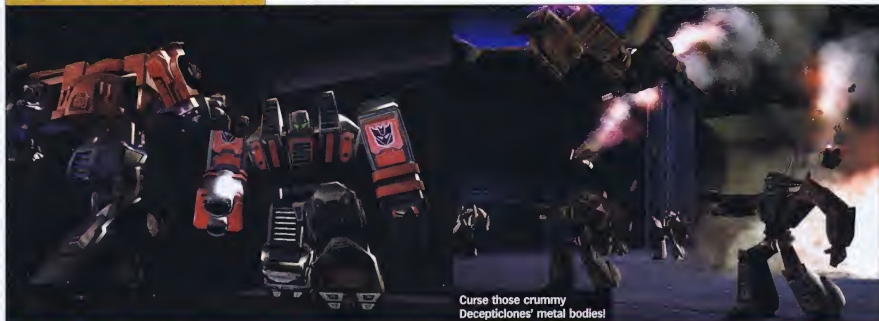
SERIOUS SAM

60

Need a new game to blast away on? *Serious Sam* has arrived to keep your trigger finger firing...

- 62 FIGHT NIGHT 2004
- 63 R: RACING
- 64 AFL LIVE 2004
- 65 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY
- 66 R-TYPE FINAL
- 68 THE SUFFERING
- 69 GLASS ROSE
- 70 DANCE UK
- 71 MUPPET PARTY CRUISE
- 72 STAR TREK: SHATTERED UNIVERSE
- 72 DISNEY'S THE HAUNTED MANSION





Curse those crummy
Decepticones' metal bodies!

THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

TRANSFORMERS

Slam, punch and smash those mangy Deceptidorks! Autobots transform!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: MELBOURNE HOUSE
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: MAY
WEBSITE: WWW.ATARI.COM/
TRANSFORMERS
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Those Melbourne Housies! This will be their fourth game for the PS2 following their esteemed Grand Prix Challenge, Le Mans 24 Hours and the decidedly overage Men in Black II: Alien Escape. They've been around a while though, previously making games for the Commodore 64.

Children of retro, awaken! Any kid worth a black-market dollar back in the '80s and early '90s not only knows about Transformers, they've probably got those tin-headed war-bringers weaved into their psyche as tough-as-steel male archetypes – such was the phenomenon. Not only were the cartoons a must-watch in order to partake in next-day bubbler conversations, the toys were sensational. In our mature lives we judge our social status by our cars, clothes and homes. Back then, it was all about who had the coolest Transformers.

They're going through quite a revival at the moment, with new toys that hark back to the chunky, metal figures of old, and the Transformers Armada cartoon and related merchandise selling like hot robo-cakes. The game's marketers, some of whom no doubt grew up watching Transformers, can sense this. It was inevitable then that those hulking war-like robots, able to transform from humanoid form to vehicle, would crash land onto the PS2 schedule. Coincidentally it was Melbourne House who took up the license, and yippe-yi-yay, they've done a pretty spunky job.

Transformers is a frenetic third-person techno-fest shoot-'em-up centred around the civil war between the noble Autobots and the pimping Decepticons. About a million years ago the war was reaching its peak. It seems both races were getting kinky over a smaller, third race of Transformers called mini-cons. These tiny suckers could augment themselves onto the bigger races, providing massive military advantages in combat. Sounds like something that could be useful in a robot war, ay?

However, the mini-cons were pacifists, so they all huddled into a spaceship and bugged off to the other side of the universe. They crashed on Earth, and now, many eons later, the race is on to recover them.

CHOOSE YOUR WARRIOR

You'll start the game off by deciding which Autobot you're going to take into combat. First up there's the iconic Optimus Prime who, while being the heaviest robot, is also the most powerful. When up close to an enemy he can dispense some sweet chin music with his knuckles-o'-steel. There are a few hand-to-hand combos available depending on your power-ups, and while these are available to the other two Autobots as well, it's the powerful "Big Daddy OP" who's our 'bot. Prime can also hold more powerful combinations of mini-con augmentations (more on these later), meaning you'll be using this guy to take on most of the end-of-level bosses.

As for his mechanical metamorphosis, Prime transforms into a heavy truck – good for ploughing through enemies, but not very fast. Next up on the grid is all-rounder Red Alert. This guy can do everything

Ed's still got his collection of '80s Transformers toys...

BETTER THAN

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY

WORSE THAN

MAX PRIME 2

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The boss fights and mini-con power-ups. Excellent

What they need to fix

More levels, more aerial shenanigans and online play please!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2
SPECIAL PRESENTATION



Regardless of age, Transformers fans will be impressed



Run Optimus, run! You've just gotta love Prime - he rocks!

OPTIMUS PRIME - DEATH AND REBIRTH

Optimus Prime marked his place as bastion of all things noble with his demise in *Transformers: The Movie*. The great red one copped some fatal damage from a scuff with arch-Decepti-guy, Megatron. But it was clear that the Transformers' creators knew about Prime's popularity, tagging the bond-like teaser line "Optimus Prime will return" onto the end of the film's credits - a promise they made good on with a resurrection episode in the next post-film season. The rest of the film's autobots weren't so lucky.



decently and transforms into an all-terrain SUV, able to drive over rocky or watery terrain. Other than that he's not too exciting.

Finally there's the light and speedy Hot Shot. This guy can't pack as much artillery as the other two, but he can transform into a speedy sports car and zoom away from danger. While many might fear the transforming aspect is trivial, they haven't seen the game's final minion-flooded levels, where often your only option is to transform and speed away.

Now that you've made your Autobot selection, the

bumper kicking. Dashing in and around the many obstacles that dot the landscape you'll wear out your thumb as you mash the fire button, pumping out wave after wave of primary fire, followed by secondary missile love to ice the cake. The many obstacles that litter each level can prove both a hindrance and a blessing. At times you can get caught up on them as you're strafing backwards, but other times they can provide handy cover. Also, when taking on enemies in an all-out blast-a-thon, you won't notice their backup joining the fray from over a hill or from a dropship. You'll retreat for a breather

"WHEN TAKING ON ENEMIES IN AN BLAST-A-THON, YOU WON'T NOTICE THEIR BACKUP"

Lights dim and the action starts. Here you'll be plunked into whichever one of the game's eight stages you're up to. You'll then be given a broad mission objective from your fellow Autobots, like "move to the peak of the mountain/temple". They're broad because the gameplay areas are open, often covering what looks like a few square kilometres of virtual space, with mini-con power-ups scattered throughout. Pick these up and equip them to give your 'bot special abilities, and combine them to customise yourself to your required specifications.

It won't be long, however, before you come across a merry band of steel-headed enemies begging for a

more often than you'd expect, and despite the fact that every enemy you kill leaves some health behind, you'll be coping such rampaging damage you'll often feel behind the eight ball. So are there any alternatives to just going in hard? Yes.

A last-minute inclusion to the game was the Recon Mode. This takes you into a first-person view and allows you to creep around areas without making a sound. Jumping into this mode while using other stealth-influenced mini-cons will turn you into a stealthy assassin. Add-ons like the sniper rifle and cloak mini-con improve your stealth effectiveness considerably. Provided you



Mini-cons can even give you the power of flight! Arooga!

CGI IS THE KEY

In keeping with the impeccable presentation of the rest of the game, the CGI cut-scenes that bookend most of the game's levels are totally tops. What's impressive is how there's one for whichever Autobots you're playing the game with. Some clips feature gargantuan spaceships crashing to the ground and bosses emerging from their depths to splatter you like an insect on a windscreen. It's all actually reasonably well acted, but of course, we'd expect nothing less...



target your enemy's weak spot, the former can destroy most in a single shot – a very handy ability to have.

MINI-CONS OF WAR

There's a heap of other mini-cons that can do even slicker things. While they don't all impact your playing style, some are damn cool or necessary to have in certain instances. There are 40 mini-cons in total, and while some of the important ones are easy to find, many are scattered, nestled in nooks and crannies throughout the

hid previously unattainable pick-ups. Another aspect to the mini-cons is that they're colour coded. When you go to the Loadout screen and select your weapons, if you equip two or three mini-cons of the same colour you'll receive superior endurance.

There's one final thing about these cool little critters that must be said. After the first level you'll be given your very own mini-con sidekick – a Mini-Me of sorts. Brag about him all you want, as he'll likely save your rump in a few situations. While he mainly keeps to your side firing at enemies, with a press of a button you can merge with him and forge forth into some *Matrix*-like combat, where your enemies slow down and your attacks do greater damage. Don't break into tears of joy just yet – your health will decrease quickly, meaning this ability, while cool, should only ever be used in short spurts. A good example of when to use it is when you've got the sniper rifle and, using the slowdown effect, get to take out some close-quarter enemies with headshots.

AIM FOR ME, BITCH!

That is, if they have a head. *Transformers* features a welcome diversity of enemies to obliterate. Walking spider-like turrets, *Star Wars*-inspired bots that morph into spheres, 'bots with shields, flying 'bots – and that's only the beginning! Some foes are so gigantic they'll whip you around like a stripper's panties.

"WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE SNIPER RIFLE, TAKE OUT SOME ENEMIES WITH HEADSHOTS"

game's levels. It's the appeal of the mini-cons, in fact, that prompts you to explore the game world rather than just speeding through each level. Apart from the mini-cons, there are also data-con pickups that can be found by the wily adventurer. These aren't as cool however, and mostly unlock artwork and behind-the-scenes material. That said, on the brain-frying masochistic Commander difficulty, some data-cons yield up novel game cheats, such as speeding up the already fast gameplay.

The mini-cons are where it's at though. You'll have to blast through the game at least once to discover some crucial varieties, like the speedboost and glider. When used in unison they can send you soaring off high cliffs and mountains, allowing you to glide to new areas that

But who are these freaks? As the story goes, the majority of your opponents aren't Decepticons at all, but are instead Decepticones. What does this mean? Mainly, they can't transform – you've got the edge there – but that's not to say they're a pushover. Apart from using swarm tactics where you'll find yourself inundated with sky-fulls of heated plasma and missiles, these clones can use group tactics like creating an advancing shield wall while a heavy sword-stroking 'bot moves toward you behind their cover. At other points you'll find yourself huddled in a corridor shootout and will spot two or three grenades headed in your direction, intense stuff. Lone clones also have a tendency to retreat after you've gunned down all their friends, before opening fire on you



HAVE YOU PLAYED THIS ONE?

Think this is the first Transformers game? You'd be totally wrong! Based on the awful Beast Wars cartoon, *Beast Wars Transformers* was released on the PSone a few years ago. As well as that garbage, *Transformers: Totals* was released in Japan at the end of 2003. We didn't get it over here in Oz, mostly because it was absolute tripe. Big thanks to the gurus at Melbourne House for doing something decent with the license at last. It looks like just like everything else in the world – if it comes from Down Under, it must be quality. Unless, of course, we're talking about sitcoms. Or soap operas. Or Belgian chocolate. Or French Fries. Sigh.



from new-found cover.

While such antics boost cardio palpitations, your opposition is often still cheaply vulnerable to the gazing eyes of the sniper rifle. If they can't work out where they're being shot from they'll often go into rabid-dog mode and walk around in a circle a couple of times before coming to rest, again, in your crosshairs. But by and large, their aggression, artificial intelligence, firepower and numbers make them a tough crew to crack. Expect to be hiding behind walls to pick off enemies one at a time.

FIGHTING WITH THE BOSS

The real jewels in *Transformers*' crown are the boss fights. At the end of most of the levels you'll come face to face with a genuine Deception. These encounters are pulled off brilliantly. One of the first battles will be against Psyclonix, one of Megatron's right-hand bots. This punk transforms into an apache-styled helicopter complete with rockets and other death-dealing accessories. The battle happens out the front of an Aztec temple and you'll have to dodge countless

explosions while searching the skies for your hovering foe. Sound impressive? You ain't seen nothing yet. Taking on Tidal Wave at the end of the fourth level should come with a disclaimer for pregnant mothers and those with weak hearts. Without giving too much away, we'll just say he's one of the biggest enemies we've ever seen in a video game. But hold the phone. If you collect 35 of the 40 mini-cons you'll be able to take on Unicron at the end of the game. Oh yeah, Unicron – he's the Transformer that turns into... A PLANET!

Such spectacle wouldn't mean all that much if it looked like pixelated baby puke, and fortunately it doesn't. The textures and lighting used on the game's environments and characters are nicely designed with sky and water effects looking impressive. The weapon effects too, look stunning, particularly when you're involved in a multiple-'bot melee with numerous on-screen explosions happening at once.

The frame-rate is an interesting one. When you see the draw distance and the

smoothness in full flight as you're burning down a path, transforming, and pulling a mid-air 180, you can't help but slap your thigh like a happy bush hick. There is, however, a very noticeable frame rate drop when things get hectic, which they do a lot. The game all of a sudden is animating a dozen or so bots with guns blazing against a huge draw distance – something's gotta give. It manages not to have much of an effect on gameplay though, so it shouldn't be an issue for any but the most anal.

NOT ALL IS WELL ON CYBERTRON

Despite its good incentives to revisit levels, with only eight missions, the game's short on content. While the reasonable difficulty means you won't be able to breeze through it, competent gamers will have seen everything within a few days' solid play. And there's no multiplayer. An attempt at split-screen would've looked like dirt, but an online mode might have been revolutionary. Additionally, the level design is quite bland.

It's always the way in reviews, however, that criticisms make a heavier impact than praise. Don't take them too much to heart. Instead, if you're a fan of the Transformers or you simply love shooting things into oblivion, play this game ASAP. **A** James Ellis

OFFICIAL VERDICT

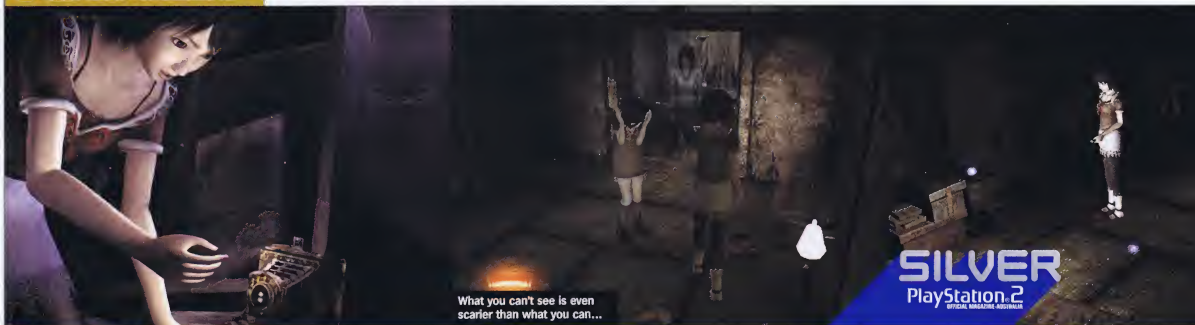
Graphics	08	Great colour, textures and effects used throughout
Sound	05	Some cheesy tunes topped with some solid FX
Gameplay	08	There's hardcore shootin' love here – nothing else
Lifespan	05	Fun, but it's over pretty quickly

Intense battles, giant bosses, sweet graphics and over-the-top action!
A superb fix for the shooter addicts.



Note the chunks of enemy bot-butt flying everywhere





SURVIVAL-HORROR

What you can't see is even scarier than what you can...

SILVER
PlayStation 2
SPECIAL PRESENTATION

PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

Prepare to soil your undercrackers – the ultimate creep-sequel is here...

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER: TECMO
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE:
WWW.FATALFRAME2.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Project Zero used a combination of actual events, a real location and urban myth to create a terrifying masterpiece. It is this winning formula conceived for Project Zero that makes *Crimson Butterfly* what it is: A weak girl. A camera. A horrific ritual involving slaughter, and unappeased spirits...

BETTER THAN

PROJECT ZERO

WORSE THAN

FLUFFY BUNNY MEETS A KITTEEN

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Just about everything!

What they need to fix

The name – it's "Fatal Frame" in the US, and that makes much more sense

The first *Project Zero* was released to minimal fanfare, but it wasn't long before it was being touted as one of the scariest games of all time. Remember the feeling that there was something under your bed in the silent darkness, that the tree branch outside your bedroom window would reach in and tear out your heart while you slept, that there was something in your dreams that would take you so you'd never wake up? *Project Zero* brought it all back, with insidiously terrifying style.

Project Zero II: Crimson Butterfly picks up where her big sister left off, so if you're expecting a walk in the park, maybe you'd be better play *Happy Fluffy Bunny Meets a Kitten* instead.

In spite of the title, *Crimson Butterfly* is not a sequel to *Miku's* adventures in the Himura mansion. Instead, it takes place about 30 years before the events of *Project Zero*, and is linked to the original more through the *Camera Obscura* rather than any particular plot device. And, unlike *Project Zero*, *Crimson Butterfly* is not based on any actual events or urban myths, but seems to be pure fiction. This, though, doesn't make it any less creepy.

The game begins with teenage twin sisters, Mio and Mayu, remembering an accident that Mayu had as a child, resulting in a permanent limp. While they sit and enjoy the scenery, Mayu becomes distracted by a red butterfly, and follows it deep into the forest. By the time Mio catches up with her, the pretty pastoral landscape

has morphed into a foreboding, nightmarish place, with mysterious stone markers with twin gods carved onto them. And no way back. The only place the sisters can go from here is down into a deeply forbidding village half-seen through the trees, to discover the mystery of a ritual that went wrong many years before.

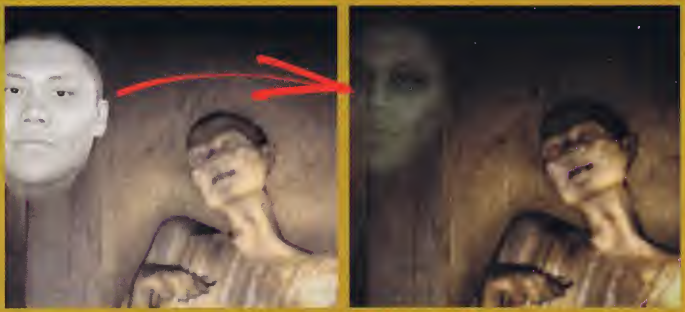
O.I... WHERE'S MY FLAMETHROWER?

It sounds much like its predecessor, and in many ways it is. You play a wussy little girl, with little strength and almost no speed, and your only weapon is – of course – the aforementioned *Camera Obscura*. Don't look around for lead pipes or daggers – your opponents are ghosts, and the only way you can defeat them is by taking not-so-happy snaps and sucking the gruesome spectres into your camera. Also, the story centres around a bloody ritual and something that went wrong, so your survival depends on solving the mystery and thwarting whoever is wreaking mayhem in the village.

Tecmo's mastery of the fear factor extends to *Crimson Butterfly*. Unlike the traditionally acknowledged leaders of the genre – *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil* – there is very little blood and gore. This game doesn't merely repulse or cause you to jump out of your seat, but uses a subtle mixture of both to leave you feeling as if there is something just over your shoulder. Like some of the best horror, it relies more on what you can't see rather than what you can, using your other senses to

LOOKING FEAR IN THE FACE

We've seen the face of fear, and it's reaaaally handsome. Well, not really. The awkwardness of *Project Zero's* character models are gone; and the environments are dark and gloomy – a perfect setting for the many disfigured ghosts that inhabit them. The perfect touch is the grainy black-and-white of the flashbacks which burst onto the screen with petrifying clarity. What's more, *QPS's* esteemed editor has landed himself in the game! Richie made no secret that he was a big fan of the original *Project Zero* when it was released. Flattered, it seems that Tecmo must have taken a mutual shine to him too. As you can see from this layered image, digitising Richie was fairly easy. Tecmo simply used an existing photo and voila, you can now go and "shoot" *Richie! Go! Now!*



She may seem meek, but she's got some surprises of her own!

The plot is as chilling as any game or movie's ever

warn you of impending danger. You'll grow to recognise the sounds that announce a spectre in your vicinity, or the heartbeat motion of the Dual Shock 2 in your hands, and to feel little cold shivers of fear down your spine. In the same way, the sounds of the opening menu or save point will cause you to release your pent-up breath in relief of a short reprieve from the relentless tension.

Those of you who played *Project Zero* will recognise the gameplay mechanics. When a ghost appears, you switch to first-person view via the camera and snap away until you've done away with the enemy. Sounds pretty simple, but it can actually be quite tricky. First of all, you have to make sure the ghost is within the circle

and wave it around, and when the Capture Circle turns green, take a shot. Given that *Crimson Butterfly* is not as claustrophobic (it takes place in a village rather than a house), you can be pointing your camera in the right direction, but be too far away for the clue to register. Luckily, Mayu isn't as useless as she appears – if she stops and looks at something, or gets left behind, more often than not she's pointing you in the right direction.

The puzzles range from finding keys to word puzzles to time-based races, and while some of them are quite tricky – even spanning chapters – they are not really what the game is about. They do, however, provide an interesting counterpoint to the running-around-getting-

"YOU'LL GROW TO RECOGNISE THE SOUNDS THAT ANNOUNCE A SPECTRE IN YOUR VICINITY"

on your lens. Then, if you can keep the ghost in your sights until the Capture Circle changes colour, you can deal more damage, and you get more points. And if you time it just right, you might get a "Fatal Frame", allowing you to quickly snap another picture for a powerful combo. Of course, the reverse side is that these ghosts are slippery – wait too long, and it will disappear, to reappear somewhere else – leaving you very little time to find it and get your photo – or it will move in for the kill. Initially, they don't do much damage, but later in the game things turn problematic. The other thing this means is your point accumulation is dependant more on skill than blind luck, so you'd better get good real quick.

A FEW POINTERS

The reason for the points? Well, accumulate enough, and you can upgrade your camera to give it more range, better sensitivity, or something called "accumulation". You can also acquire power-ups that will slow or stop an enemy for a brief period. And then, of course, there's the puzzle-solving. Since the camera was designed to see "impossible things", it can reveal clues that the naked eye can't see – so if you're stuck, whip out your camera

and wave it around, and when the Capture Circle turns green, take a shot. Given that *Crimson Butterfly* is not as claustrophobic (it takes place in a village rather than a house), you can be pointing your camera in the right direction, but be too far away for the clue to register. Luckily, Mayu isn't as useless as she appears – if she stops and looks at something, or gets left behind, more often than not she's pointing you in the right direction.

The puzzles range from finding keys to word puzzles to time-based races, and while some of them are quite tricky – even spanning chapters – they are not really what the game is about. They do, however, provide an interesting counterpoint to the running-around-getting-

Crimson Butterfly sets out to do one thing – to leave you trembling at 3am with dry-mouthed paralysis and an uncomfortable soggy in your trousers. And believe us, it succeeds. **A Michelle Starr**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Dark, creepy and gruesome. Play it at night!
Sound	09	The disembodied voices will echo in your head
Gameplay	09	The fixed cameras can irritate, but are atmospheric
Lifespan	10	There's a plethora of extras... if you're brave enough

Project Zero II: Crimson Butterfly is quite possibly the scariest game ever made, and plays superbly.

09

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

The ghosties in *Crimson Butterfly* are much tougher than before. The harmless wandering ghosts are more often than not something that you're going to need quick reflexes to capture – the harder the shot, the more points it'll bring in. The real challenges, however, are the enemy ghosts. Sometimes you can predict where they'll be and move accordingly, but at other times their movement is sporadic and totally random. A ghost might float in front of you for a few minutes before disappearing into a wall, only to reappear from the opposite wall, or appear out of the floor or the ceiling. The real danger, though, is when they attack in a group – particularly if you're going for the Fatal Frame. You might be watching one ghost while another sneaks up in your blind spot (which is quite large in camera view), so you have to be hyper-aware of your surroundings at all times.





Does this remind anyone else of Goro from *Mortal Kombat*?



FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

You at the back! Stop laughing or I'll blow you away!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: CROTEAM/
CLIMAX STUDIOS
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-4 (1-8 ONLINE)
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.CROTEAM.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: NS
ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

Croteam get their name from their country of origin, the previously troubled nation of Croatia. Among the unrest, the resourceful development team managed to rework the FPS genre and engineer a frantic shooter, the likes of which haven't been seen since the days of sprite-based FPSs.

The world is under threat from the forces of a powerful alien race, known only as Mental. Using time machines, Mental is attempting to erase the human race from the space-time continuum by altering the flow of history. This sinister assault can only be stopped by one man – a man with guts, determination, and enough firepower to destroy a small planet. That man is... Serious Sam.

In his efforts to foil the plans of Mental, Sam is sent back in time to ancient Rome, feudal China and the mystical city of Atlantis. The levels give you a variety of open and contained areas, and follow a pretty standard formula – enter a room, the doors seal shut, and you have to wipe out all the enemies to continue.

It's constant action – white-knuckled, full throttle, in-your face carnage. There are loads of heated battles, and you'll need to develop some sharp reflexes to stay alive. The controls are tight as far as shooters go, and to aid hitting targets at a distance, it also features a default auto-aim. It's definitely a huge assist, and you'll be glad you have it during the later levels. String enough kills together, and Sam will fly into a frenzy, moving and shooting faster to boost the body count.

While the level environments are fairly sparse, and the building architecture is simple, SS: NE throws a hellish amount of enemies at you at once. With showers of gore, rocket explosions and other effects, the frame-rate is a steady 30 frames per second and never dips.

Sam's weapons are fairly generic, and pretty much everything he's packing has been seen before in a first-person shooter, but each of them is useful in the right situation. While his weapons don't have an alternate fire as such, you can find different ammo types occasionally that can be used to a greater effect.

New to the Serious Sam games is the inclusion of

vehicles. Sadly the vehicles don't make an appearance very often, and they pretty much handle like crap when they do. They're an interesting aside, but not much more. The novelty soon wears off, and you'll want to get back to blowing things up on foot.

Serious Sam doesn't ooze depth, but it offers hectic gameplay that was almost believed to be a thing of the past for the FPS genre. At half the price of most new release games, shooter fans would be doing themselves a disservice by not checking it out. **A** Nick O'Shea

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics 05 Simple, but keeps the game at a frantic pace
Sound 07 Good effects and tunes to get the blood racing
Gameplay 05 Hardcore blastaroma – you know you want it
Lifespan 07 Over 40 levels, plus unlockable features and cheats

Mindless violence at its golden best. Fast, frantic, action-packed, witty, gung-ho, noisy, dumb blasting!



Serious Sam, forever the ladies' man!



BETTER THAN

RED FACTION

WORSE THAN

SOCOM II: U.S. NAVY SEALS

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The fast-paced, rock-hard, non-stop blasting. Kapow-bang-whizz-need!

What they need to fix

If you're going to put vehicles in, make them fun to drive

Die, you dir... erm... excuse me, what are you exactly?



ONE-LINER BONANZA

Among the action, Sam spouts some hilarious comments. His persona is a combination of the many action heroes we've grown up to love. Let's take a look at some of his inspiration:

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Immortalized in films like the Terminator series; Commando, Predator and Total Recall, Arnold is who most people think of now, when they think "action movie star".
Best One-Liner: "I'll be back"

SYLVESTER STALLONE

Rambo, Cobra and the more recent, Demolition Man are action movie classics.
Best One-Liner: "I am the LAW"

BRUCE CAMPBELL

Less mainstream, Bruce gained a cult following for his portrayal of Ash Williams in Evil Dead.
Best One-Liner: "Good...Bad... I'm the one with the gun."

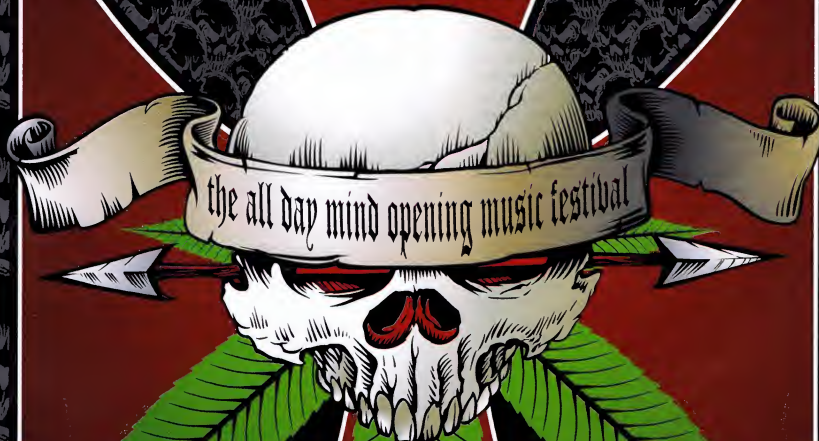


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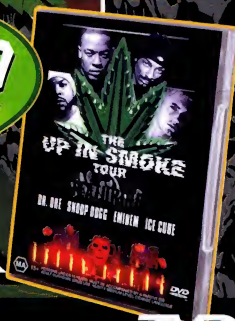
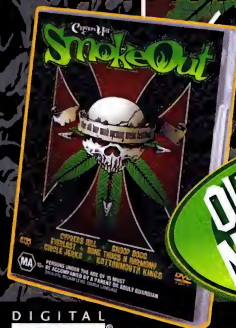
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Recognisable faces have been included – to disfigure!

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

Slip into your satin shorts to float like a zeppelin and sting like a Chinese burn!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
ANGEL STUDIOS
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE: WWW.EASPORTS.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

Electronic Arts had always set the standard when it came to boxing games with the Knockout Kings series, but a year off saw EA lose ground to Activision's licensed powerhouse, Rocky. EA responds with Fight Night 2004 and has come out swinging!

Fight Night 2004 feels not only bigger than EA's previous efforts, but louder and badder too. After experimenting with simulation and arcade style play with the Knockout Kings series, Fight Night 2004 returns to the roots of the sport in a move that will make a lot of boxing fans very happy.

From the word 'go', the player is bombarded with options to satisfy any desire for pugilism. The lone gamer can work his way through the extensive Career Mode to take the prize fighter of their choice from obscurity to a contender for the number one spot and unlock many extra features as they go. With a buddy on the couch, you can re-live any number of historical dream matches with both legends and modern day champions. Network Gamers can go online to vie for the title of world champ against contenders from all around the globe.

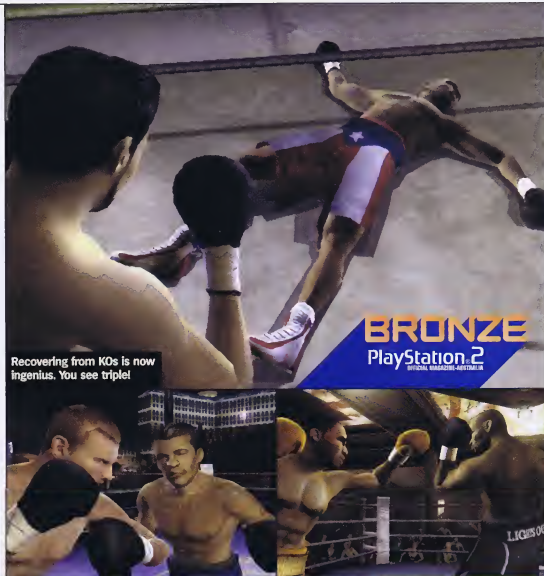
As the fighters come down the ramp, it's obvious that a great deal of effort has gone into motion-capturing every movement, as well as syncing the animation between characters. A connecting blow whips back the target's head, and body shots make the opponent lurch in pain. Even more satisfying are knockouts where, realistically, the KO'd boxer goes to jelly and falls in a heap, or slumps down against the ropes.

The revolutionary new feature in Fight Night 2004 is the new 'Total Punch Control System'. The player can control their fighter's offence almost entirely with the right analogue stick. Using the stick, the boxer's fists mimic your controller inputs. Quick flicks of the stick fire off rapid jabs, quarter rotations produce powerful crosses and vicious uppercuts come from half rotations. Similarly, the right stick can be used to block, and the left stick controls movement as well as evasive techniques like ducking and weaving. The almost exclusive use of analogue control gives a very natural feel to play, and makes it very easy for beginners to pick up and play.

The main complaint with the gameplay is that there's not quite enough emphasis on footwork. While it does play a role in contests, bouts largely consist of toe-to-toe slugfests that belie the foot speed and agility of the more graceful fighters. Sure, a token whinge, but it's definitely a noticeable trend.

Once again, EA backs up its track record for putting together a kick ass soundtrack. While there are only nine songs available, the rap tracks selected match the atmosphere of ambition, aggression and showmanship that are so often used to promote professional boxing.

The Create-A-Boxer mode is up there with the best. Along with setting attributes and basic physical aspects like height, weight and attire, you can set finer details



Recovering from KOs is now ingenious. You see triple!

like the arch of your boxer's eyebrows and even how far his ears project. About the only statistic you can't modify is your boxer's gender – to avoid controversy, there are no chicks allowed.

Fight Night 2004 is a departure from old mashfests and returns the genre to the sweet science of boxing. While the new control system gives your thumbs a workout, it makes for almost instinctual control and makes it easy to pick up. Highly recommended for fans of the squared ring. **A** Nick O'Shea

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **08** Spectacular in the ring, competent outside
Sound **08** Grunts, sharp commentary and wicked beats
Gameplay **08** Intuitive offense, but it takes getting used to
Lifespan **08** Career mode, multiplayer, and online game modes

If Fight Night 2004 were a boxer, it would quite rightly quip, "I am the greatest!"



CUT ME - I'M BLIND THERE!



While the boxers have retired to their corner for a brief rest between rounds, the close camera angle allows for a greater appreciation of the high-resolution visuals. Aside from the incredible likenesses to the actual boxers, you get a much better look at their finer details. Droplets of perspiration roll off the fighters' bodies, and you can better make out the extensive facial damage system – eyes getting black and bruised, lips that can get busted open and other facial wounds that weep blood in front of your eyes.

BETTER THAN

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2004

WORSE THAN

KNOCKING OUT TYSON

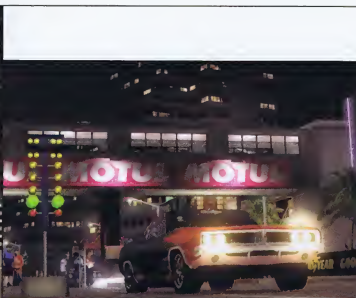
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Revolutionary new control method

What they need to fix

Not enough emphasis on footwork



R: RACING

Has the Ridge Racer series evolved into man or beast?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: NAMCO
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.RACINGEVOLUTION.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Namco introduced Ridge Racer for the PSone way back in 1994. Since then there have been five incarnations of the classic racer, with Ridge Racer V being one of the hotly-anticipated launch games when the PS2 was released in 2001.

Most people aspire to be like someone. Basketballers wish to be like Mike, swimmers emulate Thorpey and even our own Narayan Pattison hopes to be like Frank The Tank from *Old School*. Games have the same aspirations. Stealth games want to be as good as *Metal Gear Solid* and fighters aim for *Soul Calibur II* quality. Until now the Ridge Racer series has done its own thing, but *R: Racing* has gone down a different road - the same road that *Gran Turismo* is travelling on.

Namco has given *Ridge Racer* an extreme makeover. Gone are the cartoony graphics and ability to drift around corners. They've been replaced with a more realistic simulation feel. Luckily Namco has left some of things that *Ridge Racer* fans loved - great techno soundtracks, simple controls and beautiful women.

The *Racing Life* mode stars Rena, an ambulance driver turned race driver with her own set of headlights. Rena accompanies you through 14 chapters that include road races, rallies and the odd training session within a story about a girl rising to stardom on the racing track. Even with the three difficulty settings, anyone who has finished all of the championships in GT3 will blitz through this mode. Everyone else will find it mildly challenging.

Namco has captured exactly what it's like to be a racing driver with *R: Racing*. Your pit crew will provide you with compliments when you're driving well and blast you when you're driving Miss Daisy. Other drivers will talk trash when passing by, but you can counter with a special feature we've never seen in a racer before (see Torque Trash). When you're coming up behind another

competitor, a bar will appear above their car showing their nervousness. Riding the bumper will cause the bar to rise and once it starts flashing red the driver will make a mistake and crash into the nearest obstacle. While the feature is useless in the first few chapters as you'll pass everyone before the bar reaches red, it is necessary in the final stages of the game.

R: Racing's biggest problem, however, is its lack of depth. Besides the *Racing Life* mode there are only the generic multiplayer options, and with only 14 tracks to cruise on and not a large variety of cars, there's not a lot worth rewinding about. Another disappointment is the engine sound. When you eagerly give your car its first rev, it sounds like a motorbike.

R: Racing could be described as a poor man's GT. It's still a decent racer but the graphics aren't realistic, the cars sound a lot like scooters and there's little depth. It just doesn't have enough gas in the tank. **A Paul Frew**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	06	Nice but we've seen better
Sound	05	Is this a car game or Moto GP?
Gameplay	07	Great controls but turn off the brake assist
Lifespan	06	Not a lot to do once you've completed <i>Racing Life</i>

A fine racer, but you'll get more bang for your buck elsewhere. We wonder if they'll stick with the new formula...

07

TORQUE TRASH

R: Racing takes tailgating to a whole new level



Drive up behind your opponent and wait for the bar to appear above their car. Do some drift work behind them and wait for the bar to start flashing red.



This will cause them to spin out of control. Flip them off as you drive past and laugh at their bumper getting mashed into a paste on the outside barrier. While these crashes aren't quite up to par with the legendary carnage in *Burnout 2*, they definitely add a bit of extra spice to the regular racing. Here's hoping *R: Racing 2* has a 'pull out a shotgun and shoot their tyres out' option. Bring that on!

BETTER THAN
AUTO MODELLISTA
WORSE THAN
GRAN TURISMO 3

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The pressure meter - you'll probably see this being copied from here on

What they need to fix

Engine sounds - it's too much to ask for a bit of engine grunt?



The tracks are detailed - but we'd like more!



The big stadiums and the players are recognisable

It's got to be time to get rid of the short shorts?

SPORTS

AFL LIVE 2004

Crack open the VBs and grab a meat pie because it's that time again

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **ACCLAIM**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM**
PRICE: **\$69.95**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
OUT: **NOW**
WEBSITE: **WWW.ACCLAIMAU.COM/AFL2004/**
60HZ MODE: **NO**
WIDESCREEN: **NO**
SURROUND SOUND: **NO**
ONLINE: **NO**

BACK STORY

AFL arrived on the PS2 late last year and brought the whole AFL experience with it. Featuring up-to-date rosters, incredible animations and plenty of faaty modes, it was the closest thing to being at the ground with a scarf and beanie.

In 2004 we're still seeing a lot of old sayings popping up around the place and being implemented into everyday life. "Two heads are better than one", "too many cooks spoil the broth" and the classic Aussie saying, "if it ain't broke, then don't fix it". Acclaim has used this last saying as the basis for the production of AFL Live 2004. Unfortunately, we can clearly remember AFL Live 2003 having several issues so we're left wondering why Acclaim didn't grab its toolbox, show a hint of ass-crack and fix things up.

The main problem with AFL 2004, which we need to mention straight away, is the response time from players when you hit an action button. It doesn't matter if it's a mark or a basic tackle – every time you want your player to do something they'll always wait one whole second before making their move. As you can probably guess if you've ever played a sports game before, this is a major problem, especially when it comes to defence.

On most occasions you'll have a player like Jason Arkermanis running toward the posts with only you standing in his way. Hitting **○** when you're directly in front of him will result in your player tackling air and the umpire answering the crowd's question of how big his manhood is. It's a shame, because the players have a large arsenal of manoeuvres that just seem wasted because of this issue. You can punch the ball out of the air, knock down players with your shoulder and even pull off all your favourite kicks like the torpedo and snap. But every time you try to pull off one of these moves, especially when you're being guarded, you'll either get tackled if you're on the attack or watch the other team run all over you if you happen to be defending.

Fortunately though, Acclaim has brought across some of the successful aspects of AFL Live 2003. AFL 2004 is still the most in-depth Aussie Rules experience, featuring Wizard Cup pre-season matches with updated rules, a full season mode and all the post-season events such as the Brownlow and Norm Smith medals.

Acclaim, alongside developer IR Gurus has updated all the statistics including season marks, kicks and handballs so your players will perform exactly like they did last season. There are new mission-based games where you'll be given several objectives to complete before the final buzzer. But thank God – and we don't mean Gary Ablett – they've kept the super mark animations.

This year's animations look noticeably better than last year's and it really looks like the players are reaching for the stars to grab that ball. The replay feature too, allows you to re-live your glory, so you can rub it in your mate's face over and over again.

AFL Live 2004 is the best Aussie Rules title on the market today, but only by default. The control-delay problem was a major issue in last year's game and it still needs to be addressed. We're steadily inching towards a truly awesome game though. Here's hoping that next year's will be even closer. **— Paul Frew**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Fairly average but an improvement on last year's
Sound	07	New commentators make you want to mute the TV
Gameplay	05	Terrible reactions from players but simple controls
Lifespan	07	More features than Ingredients in a meat pie

A case of "same old, same old". AFL Live 2004 needs to head back to the shed and have a good look at itself.

06

PULL YOUR SOCKS UP FELLA!



If you want to master AFL Live 2004 – it takes some practise. There are training sessions to teach everything from marking to running from players, punching the ball, tackling and kicking. Being a master at this game with deft control (like the action in these screenshots) is no easy feat. Check 'em out – fairly real, eh?



BETTER THAN

AFL LIVE 2003

WORSE THAN

RUGBY LEAGUE

LAN TEST

What they nailed this time

Manoeuvres – You can do everything that your favourite player can do

What they need to fix

Reaction time – When we hit a button we want them to do more. Now!



Everything is authentic – with the AFL's full backing



SPORTS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY

Acclaim put a bit of kick back into the Rugby game

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ACCLAIM
DEVELOPER: SWORDFISH STUDIOS
PRICE: \$79.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.WORLDCHAMPIONSHIPRUGBY.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Based in Birmingham, Swordfish Studios staff has over 10 years of development experience. It's been responsible for UEFA Striker and now World Championship Rugby.

As with any new sports season, a new game based on the sport usually hits the shelves shortly after. But with EA Sports releasing Rugby 2004 late last year, Acclaim has jumped in with its own rugby title based on the old Jonah Lomu Rugby engine.

However unlike Jonah, WCR is running smoothly and playing well. Taking a very different approach to EA, WCR instead looks and plays like a classic arcade sports title you might find hidden away at your local Timezone. This is by no means a bad thing. Everything from the look of the players to the rucks has been captured perfectly and the control system makes everything from handing off to lineouts look as easy as it does on TV. When attacking, **△** and **□** pass right and left respectively, **△** is sprint, **⊙** is drop kick, **⊙** is hand off and **⊗** will punt downfield or slip in a grubber. On defence all you need to use is the analogue, **△** and **□** to change players, **△** to sprint, **⊗** to tackle or **⊙** if you really want to do some damage. During scrums and lineouts, a diagram at the bottom of the screen will appear so you know what needs to be done to win the situation. The setup may take some time for fans of EA's Rugby to grasp, but anyone who's played Rugby League or Jonah Lomu Rugby will be in between the posts in no time.

During the game players will get muddy, bloody and sweaty so that by the end of the game they look like they've played one hell of a match. Unfortunately there's only one real life stadium featured – Twickenham – with the other four being hybrids of some of the developer's favourite stadiums.

As for game modes, WCR has more competitions than Jonny Wilkinson has fans in England. You can take Australia or one of the other 20 countries through Tri-Nations, World Cup, Six-Nations and various other top level International competitions that you don't see on Fox Sports. But if you're bored with all these competitions there is also a tournament creator that you can play around with.

BETTER THAN

RUGBY 2004

WORSE THAN

RUGBY LEAGUE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Controls – so simple and easy to pick up and play

What they need to fix

Stadiums – we want a home ground advantage next time!

THAT KICK

We all saw it. That bloody Kick destroying our chances of retaining the World Cup. Well now you can set things straight. If you sat at home with your beers in both hands, now you can put your plans into play in the Classic Matches mode. Do your country proud.



Here's your chance to get some revenge on the Poms!

WCR is tough to categorise. It's a simulation with strategy, yet has a cartoony look, simple controls and hard-hitting action. More importantly, it combines the best of the both these worlds brilliantly, making it the best Rugby Union title available at the moment. **A** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Retro arcade look mixed with modern graphics
Sound	08	Miles Harrison and Stuart Barnes do a good job
Gameplay	08	Simple controls, yet strategy is still required
Lifespan	08	Plenty of goodies for Rugby fans to unlock

World Championship Rugby is a real hard hitting game that encapsulates everything about the sport.

08





Note to self – stop drinking blackcurrant juice

The new anti-smoking lung cancer campaign

R-TYPE FINAL

Jump into the R9 cockpit and kick that Bydo butt once and for all

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: IREM SOFTWARE
PRICE: \$69.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: MAY
WEBSITE: WWW.METRO3D.CO.UK
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO

BACK STORY

R-Type is a name spoken with reverence and awe by shoot-'em-up fans, and dates back to the 8-bit era. The series follows a lone pilot of an experimental space fighter in an epic battle to save Earth from the forces of the Bydo Empire.

Well, it seems that the ego of the Bydo Empire is up for another shellacking. After being shamed into submission several times before by a lone space fighter, the cyborg menace from the future is making another attack on Earth. Unlike in the past, this time the Earth forces are prepared for conflict. The brief years of peace allowed for enough time to develop a whole fleet of fighters based on the R-9 technology.

Laying out the eye candy generously, *R-Type Final* has some sumptuous visuals. If your ship isn't getting showered by the wreckage of your foes, it's being bathed in the light of narrowly dodged particle beams.

Unsurprisingly, the power-up system hasn't changed much. Your ship begins armed only with the wave cannon, which can be fired rapidly at low power or charged up to devastating effect. The invincible Force unit (that red thing you attach to your fighter) returns as the hallmark of the R-Type games, as well as the defensive bit units and a range of missiles. The Delta weapon from R-Type Delta returns, and after charging up your Force unit with enough enemy attacks you can unleash its massive power to decimate fleets of foes or dramatically weaken boss enemies. When you first go to war with the Bydo, there are only three R-Type fighters at your disposal, but as the game progresses and you achieve certain feats, there are over a hundred R-Type fighters to unlock – truly staggering stuff.

R-Type Final – like its predecessors – isn't overly frantic in the action department, but you constantly need to figure out your best plan of attack. Setting up

your Force and bit units in the best position to repel enemy fire is just as important as a potent offence. However, it's this inconsistent action that can be one of the main downfalls. There are quite often transitional sequences or just very quiet passages of play that really kill the tension, and detract significantly from the fun factor.

The main game is the bread and butter of the title, with all other play options and extras only being worth a cursory glance. There are tutorials, galleries of CG art and concept sketches, and the new 'Vs. AI' mode. This allows you to construct and customize two R-Type fighters and set them in a head-to-head battle. Sadly, it's little more than a method for gauging which setups are more effective.

At the end of the day, *R-Type Final* is a solid shooter that makes up for being a little short with oodles of challenge and copious amounts of unlockables. While the old-school formula probably won't see it gain mainstream acceptance, THQ's sharp price point gets it over the line. **A-** Nick O'Shea

R U MY TYPE?

R-Type Final really gives much nostalgia love for the long-standing fans of the genre. Aside from the classic enemies that you'll meet and blow into smithereens, some of the R-Type fighters that can be unlocked are more than a little familiar as well. There's obviously the classic R-9 available, as well as the R-9 Delta from the PSone game, and even the R-Type Leo from the lesser known arcade game of the same name. The are vaguer from references than those to discover too.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	06	Crisp, detailed visuals and classy explosions
Sound	05	Decent zaps, booms and tunes, but nothing really new
Gameplay	07	Tougher than a steel toolbox full of nails
Lifespan	07	Intense challenge and numerous ships to unlock

An old school shoot-'em-up fan's dream, but inconsistent play won't win legions of new fans.



BETTER THAN

DEFENDER

WORSE THAN

CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

A range of customisable space fighters to choose from

What they need to fix

Pacing of gameplay can be a bit haphazard



Our money's not on the featherless chicken

Good to see alien gals also like them ribbed



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Rene Rivkin found prison wasn't exactly his style

X SURVIVAL HORROR

THE SUFFERING



And we thought that Tasmania was a scary island

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

As if prison wasn't unpleasant enough already...

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
DEVELOPER: SURREAL SOFTWARE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: MAY
WEBSITE: WWW.THESUFFERING.MIDWAY.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Midway released such classic titles as Defender and... er... Root Beer Tapper. Lately though, they have been more renowned for arcade-style and sports games, but with such titles as The Suffering, they prove that they are still among the most innovative of game developers today.

When you think of prison in the fictional sense, it usually involves cigarettes, "the man" and soap being dropped in the showers. But if you think that's the end of it, Midway's new bloody, hellish prison nightmare will soon put paid to that little delusion.

The *Suffering* lands you in the role of Torque, sentenced to death row in the creepy Abbot State Penitentiary for the supposed murders of his own wife and two young sons. But there are two things wrong with this picture: one, Torque - who is prone to blackouts - has no memory of the murders; and two, there is something seriously amiss with Carnate Island, the rocky outcrop on which the prison is built. The island has a strange history, involving mysterious deaths, unexplained 'incidents', machinery breaking down, ghosts and the suicide of sadistic asylum warden Dr Killjoy. The prison itself is rotted, rusted, prone to power loss and isolated...

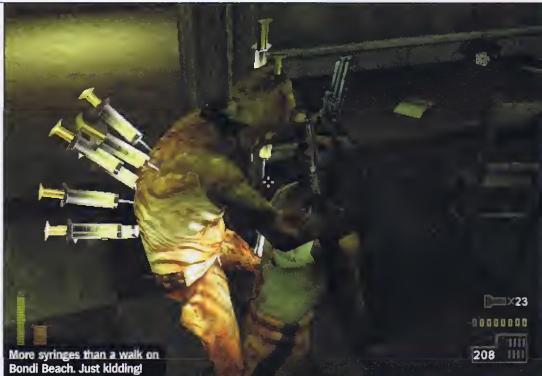
The game kicks off with an earthquake hitting the compound, but the corpses left behind weren't crushed by rubble - they have been eviscerated brutally by assailants. It's up to you to piece together the mystery of the place and discover the mystery of Torque's past - all the while hacking and slashing your way through the hordes of nightmarish creatures that infest the prison.

Torque is a protagonist, but hero he ain't. As you wander about the prison, you can choose to act with kindness or malevolence, leading you to one of three possible endings - should you turn the gas on the pleading guy in the gas chamber or rescue him? What about the guy on the wrong side of a locked door, screaming frantically to be let back in?

The *Suffering* looks like survival-horror, but in its heart of hearts, it's a shooter. You can play in either first-person or third-person mode, using the left stick to run forward, and the right stick to turn. This might give you a few headaches, but it does provide greater movement. And you're gonna need it, because dude, them zombies can move! The only real problem is that the inventory is controlled by the d-pad, meaning you have to stop moving in order to change weapons. This is potentially fatal, so you have to make sure you're safe before you try it. You can toggle the controls to your liking, though, which makes it a bit easier.

There are up to 10 weapons in the game - but by far the coolest attack feature is the insanity meter. Get crazy enough, and you can turn into a huge monster, with hellish attack power. Stay too long as a monster, though, and Torque winds up dead.

Fast-paced, frantic, and scary, *The Suffering* is action all the way - none of those nasty *Resident Evil*-style puzzles - and bloody as all hell. **A** Michelle Starr

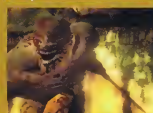


More syringes than a walk on Bondi Beach. Just kidding!

23

208

OH, BLOODY HELL



Nothing says crazy-ass criminal more than being covered in blood from head to toe. This isn't the only part of the game where Surreal Software has striven for absolute realism, and not the only reason you won't let your kids have a play. This is a prison, and you won't hear anyone muttering "oh, phooey" over a stubbed toe. These guys definitely aren't shy about dropping a few expletives whenever you run into them. Be warned!



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	A bit blocky, but the animations are cool
Sound	09	The sound effects will leave you with legs of rubber
Gameplay	07	Controls smoothly, but has a dicey inventory system
Lifespan	03	Three different endings, and plenty of action

Fans of action and/or horror should definitely NOT miss this one. It's an adventure you won't forget in a hurry.

08

BETTER THAN

FORBIDDEN SIREN

WORSE THAN

SILENT HILL 2

LAB TEST

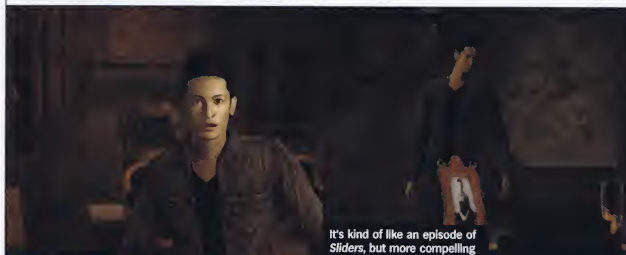
What they nailed this time

The voices in Torque's head will give you the serious heebie-jeebies

What they need to fix

The graphics are barely average for a PS2 game. More polish would be nice

It's so uneventful, even the characters look bored

It's kind of like an episode of *Sliders*, but more compelling

ADVENTURE

GLASS ROSE

It's a time warp – in more ways than one

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PRICE: \$79.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.CAPCOM.CO.
JP/GNB/
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Copcom has been one of the leaders of suspense games, with hits like *Resident Evil*, *Dino Crisis* and *Gregory Horror Show*. It's also widely known for its experimentation – which, in the long run, leaves us with much better games – so we're willing to take a few misses. For the greater good, naturally.

Technology? Bah. Point-and-click games were good enough in the olden days, and by golly, they should be good enough now. Actually, Capcom Japan's latest export



Glass Rose plays more like some kind of interactive novel, but the basic principle is the same. Have cursor. Point cursor. Click.


You play a newspaper reporter named Takashi Kageyami. Takashi, having written a feature article on an unsolved multiple murder at the Kinema Mansion in the 1920s, is approached by a girl, Naomi Katagiri, whose grandfather wrote about the mansion in a mysterious notebook. Intrigued, the pair go to the mansion – and Takashi gets sucked into a time portal, to arrive just after the first murder. Naturally, he makes it his goal to discover what really went on. And to find Naomi, who disappeared into the time portal and appears to be swanning about the mansion as some kind of ghost.

In Japan, the main selling point is the fact that the drummer of boy-band Tokio, Masahiro Matsuoka, is the basis for the voice and image of Takashi. The implication seems to be that there is really nothing better than this about the game – because, quite frankly, he really is rather goofy-looking! And the gameplay is certainly nothing spectacular. You have no actual manual control over the character, which is expected, and the cursor can be difficult to control. Also, when you talk to people, you have to guess at what is important in what they've said, and highlight it in a little sub-screen in order to continue the conversation. This is in "Normal" mode.





In "Easy" mode, it's all done for you – the cursor will

light up whenever you move it over something important, so all you have to do is roll the cursor around until it lights up. The same is true for the conversations. With the general cantankerousness of the cursor, and its repetition, the gameplay gets rather laborious, and dull. Even the "Suspense Events" – *Glass Rose*'s answer to a battle mode – are anything but. A character will attack you unexpectedly, after which you will have to move your cursor and click on a command like, "dodge to the left", within a time limit.

Onto "Mind Points"... if you highlight something important in the conversation with  Instead of , you can try to peek into what the other person is thinking. This uses Mind Points. If you fail at a suspense event, you lose Mind Points. If you fail to investigate everything of importance in a room within a time limit, you lose Mind Points. When you run out of Mind Points, you get sucked into a time vortex and it's Game Over.

The one saving grace that might keep playing *Glass Rose*, is its truly compelling story...  Michelle Starr

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics  We're not sure if that's just the house, though
Sound  Some of the voices irritate!
Gameplay  It's... err... unique...
Lifespan  You'll play through just the once, for the story

This really would have made a much better movie than a game. So many missed opportunities!



BETTER THAN

CLOCKTOWER 3

WORSE THAN

GREGORY HORROR SHOW

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

There really is nothing better than a good, old-fashioned murder story

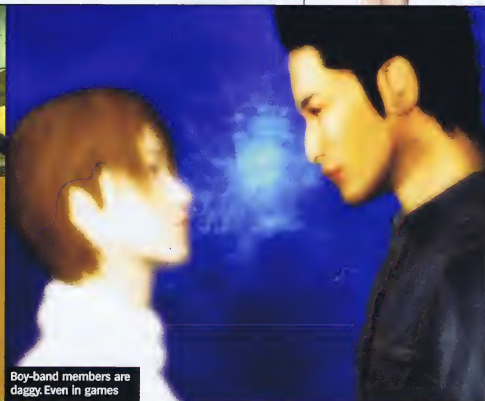
What they need to fix

Make more with the closet zombies, less with the whiny heresses

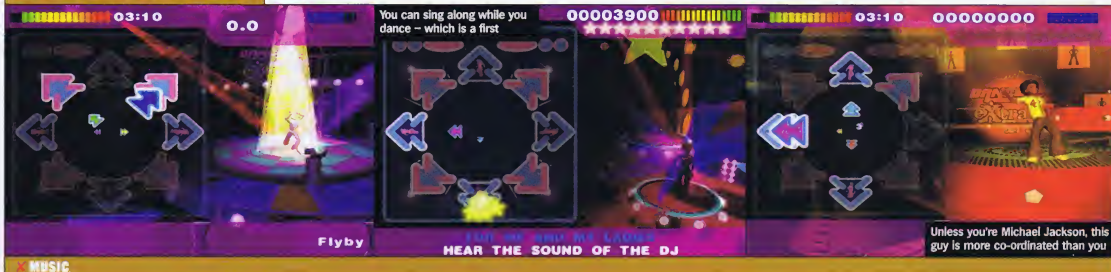


IT WAS THE BUTLER IN THE STUDY WITH THE CANDLESTICK!

All of this wandering around looking for clues is reminiscent of nothing if not the classic murder-mystery board game *Cluedo*, mustache'd butler included. What we wanna know is, where are all the French maids?



Boy-band members are daisy. Even in games



DANCE UK

Break out the (ahem) glowsticks, get low and shake that booty!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: BROADSWORD INTERACTIVE
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.DANCEUK.THEGAME.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Dancing games have been predominantly the domain of Konami, with pop music song lists and mediocre in-house efforts. It was high time someone made a dancing game with solid content – that game is Dance UK.

UK production house Big Ben Interactive thought it was time to add a European flavour to the dance game genre, but is the lure of Brit-pop and UK techno enough to lure PS2 owners back? Aren't we already weary of taking dancing lessons from a bunch of arrows?

Undoubtedly, *Dance UK* has a strong song list. Around half of them are instantly recognisable, and every one is a fine example of catchy pop/dance music. This is pretty much the mirror opposite of the usual dancing game, which offers a handful of licensed tracks and a whole lot of filler. With over 30 tracks, it should keep you coming back longer than its competitors.

The mat that comes bundled with *Dance UK* is of a high standard of manufacturing quality. It features the usual four-way arrows [for both gameplay and menu navigation], complimented by the four face buttons skirting the diagonals to complete the eight-way control. Without a doubt the best feature of the mat is the non-slip surface. Most other dance mats have a glossy surface that grips too much when playing barefoot. The quality surface means you can happily bust out the moves, although a liberal application of Velcro to the base of the mat is still recommended to keep it in one place during vigorous sessions.

To raise the stakes, *Dance UK* adds a karaoke feature, with complete lyrics appearing on the bottom of your screen for every track. To further enhance this feature, you can even pick up the *Dance UK* Wireless Karaoke Headset for a little extra cash and complete the Britney Spears/Madonna look. For your average gamer that has thumbs like Arnold Schwarzenegger but the aerobic capacity of a matchbox, having the breath left to sing along may prove to be too much of a task, but younger tykes will have a lot of fun with it.

In-game, the left side of the screen is taken up by the display that prompts you for your next dance step. A continuous stream of arrows flow from the middle of the display and radiate outward to a virtual display of your dance mat. That just leaves the seemingly simple case of hitting the pads in time with the arrows hitting the perimeter of the display. Sadly, even though a colour scheme is used to make the arrows stand out, the radiating method isn't as intuitive as some display schemes used in other dancing games. To the right, you'll see a miniature little groover busting out moves to the music that look 10 times less ridiculous than what you're doing. Sad, but true.

Dance UK is a quality mix of infectious pop and dance tunes with a fairly broad appeal. At less than a hundred bucks for the game with a mat, it's good value when compared to the competition. **A** Nick O'Shea



The mat is eight-way, so extra dance moves are needed

GROOVIN'... DOIN' IT!

The tunes are always going to cause arguments. You'll either love or hate the music here, but there's definitely some quality in there:

- Mistaeq – "One Night Stand"
- Gina G – "Ooh Ahh Just a Little Bit"
- Sine – "Let's Dance"
- Junior Senior – "Move Your Feet"
- Sophie Ellis-Bextor – "Murder on the Dance Floor"
- DJ Sammy – "Heaven"
- Run DMC feat. Jason Nevins – "It's Like That"



BETTER THAN

EYE TOY: GROOVE

WORSE THAN

AMPLITUDE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Awesome track line-up. This can make or break a game. Here, it made it!

What they need to fix

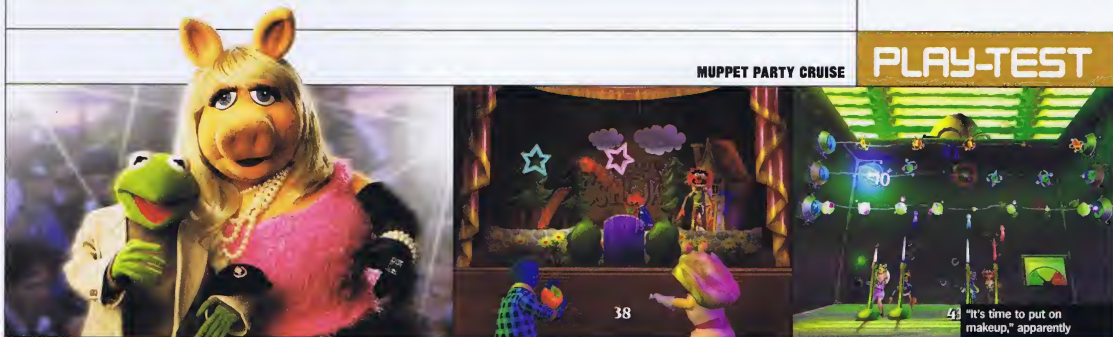
Radiating arrows are a bit hard and confusing to follow

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Purely functional, with little for show
Sound	06	A solid track listing to keep you groovin'
Gameplay	07	Swirly arrows take some getting used to
Lifespan	07	Quality tunes will have you boogyrin' more than once

Great songs, excellent add-ons and good value. Well worth a punt. And it'll get you back in shape!





MUPPET PARTY CRUISE

The Muppets go on a boat-based bender

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: MASS MEDIA
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.MUPPETGAME.COM/PARTYCRUISE
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Jim Henson's Muppets shot to fame in the early '80s in *The Muppet Show*, which featured the wacky puppets doing comedy sketches and songs with huge guest stars. A series of movies and a recent revival of the TV show have kept them in the international spotlight consistently since then.

BETTER THAN

PAC-MAN FEVER

WORSE THAN

EYE TOY: PLAY

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Mini-games – a great selection of some new ones with old favourites

What they need to fix

The Long Cruise mode – throw it overboard!

Making a good party game is a lot like making a margarita. You take your ingredients; handful of mini-games, corny music and popular characters, blend until it plays smoothly, pour into a party location and serve.

Mass Media has got all the ingredients for this party game, including some of the most popular characters of all time – The Muppets. We discover In the opening movie that the Muppets have been running amok on a cruise liner. But they aren't abiding by the old law of 'what happens on the road stays on the road', and are instead sharing everything they did on the cruise liner with us. But while there are no sleazy sex stories involving Miss Piggy or drunken Animal moments, there is still plenty of fun to be had.

Muppet Party Cruise is split into two different modes, Short and Long Cruise. The Short Cruise allows you to play around with some of the 30 odd mini-games available. However, to play with all of them, you'll need to unlock them in the Long Cruise mode.

In the Long Cruise you can choose from Gonzo, Animal, Fozzie, Miss Piggy, Pepe the Prawn or Kermit to go cruising with. Muppets will have to win mini-games in order to receive party favours, which then open the locked mini-games. The Muppet with the most party favours wins the Long Cruise.

While it sounds like paradise, there are a lot of problems in the Long Cruise that will make you want to grab a buoy and jump overboard. The first is the slow transition between player turns. There is a silly rule that once you've collected 1000 credit points you receive two free goes. But because credits are as common as cane toads in Queensland, you can rack up the free goes without your mates even leaving their starting point. The other problem is the camera. It is way too close to the Muppet, making it tough to navigate around.

Luckily the great games save MPC from the sharing the same fate as the Titanic. The games range from button-mashers to others that require a little more coordination. The majority of them are quite unique,

though some basic ideas are repeated a few times – but all of them contain that unique Muppet charm. A nice added touch is the addition of old Muppet favourites hosting some of the games. From *Rizzo the Rat* to *OPS2's* favourite *The Swedish Chef*, there's no doubt you'll run into one of your childhood favourites.

As we said, developer Mass Media had all the ingredients for a good party game. But instead of using only the basic Ingredients, it also threw in the Long Cruise mode which turned what could have been a perfect-tasting margarita into a lethal concoction. Luckily the Short Cruise mode balances things out, making MPC worthy for Muppet fans, bargain hunters or anyone who just loves to party. **A** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Colourful but fairly average
Sound	07	Short Cruise is great but Long Cruise blows
Gameplay	07	Plenty of games that will keep everyone playing
Lifespan	07	Thirteen levels, several play modes and rankings

Despite some problems, MPC is still great fun to party with and worthy of an all-nighter.



PUSH IT REAL GOOD

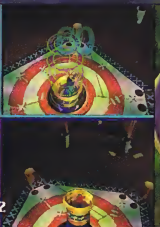
In contention for mini-game of the year is *Car Push*. If you've ever broken down this will be all too familiar: There are two teams of two Muppets. One Muppet pushes the car and one steers. Steering is a breeze until you get to the train crossing and have to swap over. Then you have to mash **X** and **O** to get your motor running and reach the finish line. The only question is, how did a desert road end up on a cruise liner? Eh?



This is about as debauchorous as Animal gets



Everyone's favourite Muppets feature in the game





SHOOTER

STAR TREK: SHATTERED UNIVERSE

Time to go trekking again

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: STARSPIRE INTERACTIVE
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.TDKM.COM/GAMES/STARTREK/
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

Star Trek fans will be cheering with the release of *Shattered Universe*. Despite being able to pilot various *Star Trek* spacecrafts including six never-before-seen vehicles, fight in 19 missions and take part in a brand new *Star Trek* adventure, there is no sign of Captain James T. William Shatner at all.

Shattered Universe is based on the episode "Mirror Mirror", or for Trekkers, episode 39 of the original series. The game takes place in an alternate universe where the Federation is no longer interested in doing good, but instead only wants to destroy everything in its path, including the Enterprise.

Featuring plenty of action and space explosions, it doesn't take long before you're in the thick of it. The control system is very basic so you'll be gunning down Federation battleships in no time.

But this brings us to *Shattered Universe's* only real

problem, its special effects. When one of these ships is blown to smithereens, there's an explosion that looks like it came from a D-Grade sci-fi from the '70s.

Star Trek fans – your money will be well spent. *Shattered Universe* is one *Star Trek* game that has just about enough authenticity to live long, and indeed prosper, in any Trekkers' collection. **B** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	06	Blocky and not very crisp
Sound	07	All the voices and acting sound authentic
Gameplay	07	Easy controls and simple missions
Lifespan	05	Not much to do once your mission is over

Poor effects let this down but it is still a worthy *Star Trek* game. Not really good enough for non-Trekkers though.

06



ACTION

DISNEY'S THE HAUNTED MANSION

Chills, thrills and things that go bump in the night

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE
PRICE: \$69.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.HAUNTEDMANSIONGAME.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

This game is NOT based on Disney's Eddie Murphy movie of the same name. It hosts entirely new characters, and is based on the spooks and spectres of the Disneyland attraction. Those of us Down Under who haven't actually been to Disneyland won't recognise half of it, but that doesn't detract from it one bit – it's still a good piece of spookilycious fun.

You play the character Zeke – a gawky fellow with a startling resemblance to Disney's cartoon Ichabod Crane – who has come to the mansion thinking he'll become the new assistant caretaker. But that was just a lure to get some poor sod to come and set about releasing the 999 tortured souls in the mansion, held under the thrall of resident bad guy Atticus Thorn.

It's certainly not breaking any new ground. The premise is, you have to wander the mansion and find the trapped souls by investigating furniture in the rooms. You then have to suck the souls into your spiffy magic

lantern (which fires beams to defeat the nasties), and continue on. It's not so simple, though. In each room, you have to reach the light switch before you can collect the souls, and that can involve some unique puzzles.

It's neither terribly complicated or difficult, but when all's said and done, it's simple and addictive, and you'll have a lot of fun playing it, even if it doesn't quite give you the creeps you were hoping for. **B** Michelle Starr

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Suitably grim, but not too dark for decent visibility
Sound	09	Fantastic voice acting and freaky sound effects!
Gameplay	08	Simple, but captivating
Lifespan	05	You'll finish it in a few hours

It's aimed at younger audiences, but this is still well-rounded and worth a few hours of exploration.

07

mums love music on DVD

don't forget... mother's day is
sunday 9th may

MAY
9 Sunday



simply red
live in sicily



jewel
live at humphrey's by the bay



cher
the farewell tour



sarah mclachlan
VH-1 storytellers



the corrs
best of... the videos



bee gees
one night only



fleetwood mac
tango in the night



david cassidy
live in concert



tom jones
live at cardiff castle



peter gabriel
growing up live



michael crawford
in concert



the pretenders
the isle of view

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Left to right: Agent Smith, Agent Smith, Agent Smith

The Matrix Revolutions

Director: The Wachowski brothers **Starring:** Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving **Distributor:** Roadshow **Rating:** M15+ **Out:** Now **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: *The Matrix Revolutions* concludes the story of the last few hours of the human city Zion. With the machines burrowing into the core of the planet, the human resistance makes a final stand to save their world. Meanwhile, Neo believes he understands the truth behind the Matrix and heads toward the machine city to try and end the war once and for all.

Pretty much everything that could have saved this movie from repeating the mistakes of its predecessor is ignored for the sake of eye candy. Potentially interesting plot points are discarded in favour of dull fight scenes, none of which are as

interesting as anything we've seen previously. Even worse, each set piece is long and drawn out.

Barely any questions that were raised from the previous films are answered; instead we're forced to sit through long stretches of pointless pontificating and endless brawling.

The Matrix Revolutions is a bad movie. Its glossy action and expensive special effects are no substitute for the crucial deficiencies in the plot, making this a cruelly depressing end. **3/10**

EXTRAS: An ad for the new *Matrix* game, a bland 30-minute 'making of, special effects feature, multi-angle breakdown of the final fight. **6/10**

VERDICT: An embarrassing movie. Impressive technically though. **B. AM**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Super Burly Brown!

One of the most interesting bonus features on the extras disc is a look at the huge fight between Neo and Smith that takes place in the rain at the end of the movie. Here you can use the angle button to switch between behind-the-scenes footage, storyboard sequences and the finished article, with the other two angles being displayed simultaneously in smaller windows at the bottom of the screen.



Welcome to the Jungle

Director: Peter Berg **Starring:** The Rock, Seann William Scott, Christopher Walken, Rosario Dawson **Distributor:** Columbia **Rating:** M15+ **Out:** Now **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: Does The Rock have what it takes to fill Arnie's gargantuan shoes? In a word, yes – but *Welcome to the Jungle* isn't the ideal film to showcase his talent.

The Rock plays a bounty hunter named Beck who's dying to do something a little more normal, like open his own restaurant. "You deliver my boy back here, you bring him right through that door, and you walk out of this house a free man," says his boss. It's an attractive proposition, so Beck hops a plane to Brazil to fetch absconder Travis (who's "pissed off the wrong people") back home to LA. Unfortunately, the youngster isn't going to come easy, and there are other hurdles, too.

Intriguing beginning, lengthy action sequence to conclude, and a rather likeable performance from The Rock – what more could action fans want? Um, how about a story that entertains throughout? And while you're at it, turf Seann William Scott – he defines annoying here.

The Rock's got a fair way to go before he'll be making his imprint in front of Mann's Chinese Theatre, but this might be good enough to generate interest in the man's future action endeavours. **5/10**

EXTRAS: Two decent commentaries, a bunch of short featurettes covering the stunts, effects and locations, Christopher Walken, cut stuff, trailers for other movies. **6/10**

VERDICT: The extras make up for the film's flaws. Sort of. **B. CM**



"Dude, you rock."
"Rock, you dude."

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Welcome to the Jungle Uncensored

One of the fun bonus features is a rather amusing mockumentary on The Rock's relationship with one of his baboon co-stars. Dwayne obviously has a sense of humour, as this six-minute doc shows. Full, sordid details of The Rock's love affair with the simian Camilla are exposed for all to see here... By the way, did you know that *Welcome to the Jungle* was called *The Roundup in the States*? No? Neither did Richie.



YOU WANT MORE?

For the inside scoop on all the latest DVD releases grab yourself a copy of What DVD. NOW!



Wonderland

Director: James Cox **Starring:** Val Kilmer, Kate Bosworth, Dylan McDermott, Carrie Fisher, Lisa Kudrow, Josh Lucas, Christina Applegate **Distributor:** Columbia **Rating:** MA15+ **Out:** May **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: On July 1, 1981, four members of a drug gang were murdered in a house on Wonderland Ave. in L.A. Has-been porn star John Holmes (Val Kilmer) was somehow involved. David Lind (Dylan McDermott) told authorities Holmes was behind the murders. Holmes told a different story. Trying to get the truth out of either was next to impossible.

There's not a hint of sex or barely a mention of the porn industry here — this is Holmes post-porn, a loser whose daily routine now involves bongos and syringes.

Performances are the star attraction. Val Kilmer proves himself as a gifted and versatile actor. Josh

Lucas (*The Hulk*) gives a menacing performance as the gang's lead dealer, and Kate Bosworth (*Blue Crush*) offers a disturbing turn as Holmes' young girlfriend, Dawn.

But it's Cox's unusual direction — a lot of grain, murky colours and courageous editing choices, that make *Wonderland* the film it is. Some will be disappointed by the lack of "action", but others will appreciate the intrigue. **7/10**

EXTRAS: A lame commentary by James Cox and co-writer Captain Mauzner, deleted scenes, production photos, plus the original LAPD crime scene footage. **4/10**

VERDICT: The film's very good, but the grisly crime scene extra will just about put anyone off. **A- CM**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Gore — only good when it's fake
One of the bonus features on the *Wonderland* DVD is freaky — the original LAPD crime scene video. The camera zooms right in on the blood splattered on the wall, and everything in the apartment where the *Wonderland* murders took place is detailed. If that's not spine-chilling enough, the dead bodies are still there! We're all morbidly curious, but it's hard to believe this extra was approved in the first place!



DVD OF THE MONTH

"Pst... I used to be Batman. The chicks loved the car..."

The Italian Job

Director: F. Gary Gray **Starring:** Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron, Edward Norton, Seth Green, Jason Statham **Distributor:** Paramount **Rating:** M15+ **Out:** May **Price:** \$29.95



FILM: As a remake, the 2003 version of *The Italian Job* is a mixed blessing for fans of the Michael Caine original. Rather than rake over the coals, it jettisons most of the style, themes, subtext, characters, content and plot of the classic. The few ideas retained have been transported to an American setting, where squeaky-clean crooks cross and double-cross in L.A.

"Marky" Mark Wahlberg is the star, simultaneously avenging the death of his mentor (Donald Sutherland) and courting his daughter (Charlize Theron). He hires a dream team of crimes: a hacker, a driver, a sapper, and a safecracker

with a love for cars (Theron, again). Together they plot to rob gold bullion back from a traitor to their syndicate (Ed Norton), and whisk the loot away through traffic-jammed streets.

For a single viewing, everything is in order. But woe to anyone who, out of curiosity, follows on with a rental of the '69 version. Beneath its antiquated pace and old-school sexism lies a statement on the value of enterprise, firepower and even nationalism. Today's follow-on spans the breadth of the Earth, and goes to unusual lengths to entertain. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Five short and banal promo docs, six average deleted scenes, and the trailer. **6/10**

VERDICT: Not seedy or rollicking enough. Rent only. **B- JC**



It's called *The Italian Job*, but the job is done in L.A. Duuuuh!

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Maximum Mini manufacturing madness!
Throughout filming of *The Italian Job*, no fewer than 32 Mini Coopers were used. There was even a full-time panel-beating shop set up to patch the cars up after any prangs during shooting. Two electric-powered Minis were also made especially for the movie, as petrol-powered vehicles are not allowed to operate in L.A.'s subway system. Strange that, seeing as L.A. has to be THE smoggiest city on the face of the planet!



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RE-BOOT

We're so helpful, even Barney has started asking us for advice!



We've sat through more than our fair share of *Simpsons* re-runs on telly and we now know for a fact, that plenty of you are having little "re-runs" of your own trying to get through *Hit & Run*.

The OPS2 team hopped straight to it and we've put this little guide together for you to help you on your way.

The latest *Final Fantasy* instalment has been causing its usual headaches as well, so we've written up a complete guide to the game. Check out Part One beginning on page 82 and be sure to check out Part Two next issue!

James Ellis

JAMES ELLIS
Tips Editor

SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO "HAVE A COW"

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

Springfield's been conquered. Next stop Shelbyville!

GENERAL TIPS

■ THE MEAN STREETS

Familiarise yourself with each level. This isn't *The Getaway*, so memorise the best routes and you'll rarely get lost.

■ GET SHORTY

Look out for Krusty glass and use every short-cut you can find. The time limits may be on the generous side at the start of the game, but they don't stay like that forever.

■ NOW THAT'S MONEY!

You can always go back to previous levels at a later stage, so don't worry if you miss items. However, collect every coin you spot and try not to blow it all early on; some of the required purchases later in the game are quite expensive.

■ LET 'EM WALK

Avoid pedestrians. Sure it's fun to send them flying but it'll increase your hit 'n run meter faster than you can say "no TV and no beer make Homer something, something".

■ SLIP 'N' SLIDE

Powerslide as much as you can, you'll maintain a lot more speed out of the corners this way. Tap the R1 button to get into a slide and maintain it with a little throttle.

■ UNLOCKIN'

So it's not the hardest game in the world, and if you use every shortcut and you've got the right car for the job the missions shouldn't cause you too much grief. But it's the sprinkles on the *Hit & Run* donut that makes unlocking the extras all the more enjoyable. Mmmmm... sprinkles.

■ THE RIGHT CAR FOR THE JOB

Don't make the mistake of buying every car you unlock (at least not at the beginning). Check out their stats and only buy the cars that are better than the ones you already own.



IN RE-BOOT THIS MONTH...

78	THE SIMPSONS	TACTICS
82	FINAL FANTASY X-2	TACTICS
92	PRINCE OF PERSIA	TIPS
92	JAMES BOND: EON	TIPS
92	CRASH NITRO KART	TIPS
92	SONIC HEROES	TIPS

LEVEL 1 BONUS MISSION

Find Cletus at his shack near the Royal King Trailer Park. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these.

- Race 1 – Find Millhouse just past the Trailer Park
- Race 2 – Find Nelson at the Springfield Gasoline closest to Mr Burns' Mansion
- Race 3 – Find Ralph in front of the Church
- Wager Race – Look for Mafia guy in front of the school

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Home-made Football – The treehouse in the Simpson backyard
- Crab Juice – In Paul and Linda McCartney's secret garden on the Kwik-E-Mart roof. Use the Duff truck to get up there
- Insanity Pepper – On a shed in the Wiggum backyard. The Wiggums live a little further down from the Flanders' house, on the corner
- Spine Melter 2000 – Near the Burns Mansion and the Stonecutter's secret tunnel there is a small street with a roundabout and a tree in the centre. Past that is an alley, the card is down a little and on the right, near a garage
- Parchment – Inside the Stonecutter's tunnel, jump on the middle box and onto the columns
- Carbon Rod – In the large room where you find the entrance to Homer's workstation. You'll need to make your way to the top and jump across the three fans
- Mr Sparkle Box – On the roof of a trailer in the Royal King Trailer Park. Follow the coins and mind the jumps

WASP CAMERAS

- The Flanders' backyard
- The Simpsons' other neighbour's yard
- The Wiggums' backyard
- The playground on Evergreen Terrace
- On top of the Kwik-E-Mart
- On top of Lard Lad Donuts
- On top of the Springfield Gasoline
- There's two on top of the school
- Behind the school
- On the bus in the school playground
- There's two on top of the rust coloured bridge on the way to the power plant
- There's two in the Royal King Trailer Park
- In the field beside the cow barn
- There's two in the hidden room within the Stonecutter's Tunnel
- Beside the rocket car at a house near Burns' Mansion
- On top of the tower beside the raised bridge, down the hill from Burns' Mansion

GAGS

- Simpsons' house – the TV, the swing set, the BBQ and the tiki
- Flanders' house – the comet shelter
- Power Plant – the tank in the parking lot and the lever in Homer's workstation
- Springfield Elementary – the fire extinguisher and the fire alarm

Familiarising yourself with every area is the key to completing the game



- Kwik-E-Mart – the Squishee machine, Frostillicious, the silent alarm, the ATM and Larry the Looter
- The swing set in the Evergreen Terrace playground

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at the Kwik-E-Mart or Springfield Elementary, and Gil will sell you the bonus cars near Cletus' shack.

ROCKET CAR

- There's a bonus car that can't be accessed through the phone booths. It's parked in front of a house near Burns' Mansion.

LEVEL 2 BONUS MISSION

- Find Abe Simpson across the street from Herman's Military Antiques. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these races.

- Race 1 – Find Millhouse at the Krusty Burger near the Police Station
- Race 2 – Find Nelson at the Krusty Burger near the construction site
- Race 3 – Find Ralph down from Springfield Stadium
- Wager Race – Mafia guy near the car wash

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Head of Jebediah – On top of the old Jebediah Springfield statue
- Radio Toy – On top of a building to the left of the statue
- Bonestorm Game – On top of the Legitimate Businessman's Social Club, park a car under the fire escape and use it to reach the stairs
- Big Butt Skinner – Above the brushes in the car wash that lies between the Legitimate Businessman's Social Club and the rail yard
- Mr Honey Bunny – In the rail yard on a carriage in front of the Slide Factory. Go further up and use the stairs of the Tea Factory to hop across the carriages
- Driver's License – In a small enclosed alley across the street from where the giant magnifying glass is burning down the matchstick building
- Krusty Brand Home Pregnancy Test – On the statue beside Springfield Stadium

WASP CAMERAS

- On the steps of the Court House
- One of each of two sets of Town Hall steps
- In front of the Natural History Museum
- In front of a gazebo near the museum
- On the roof of a building near the research centre
- On the Hospital lawn
- On top of Lard Lad Donuts near the construction site
- The roof of Moe's Bar
- In front of the car wash
- Two on the roof of the Businessman's Club
- Near the stairs in the rail yard
- On the first set of carriages in the rail yard
- On the first carriage opposite the water tower
- Behind the Krusty glass in the rail yard
- In the Krusty Burger car park near police station
- In front of the monorail stairs
- On the monorail platform
- The roof adjacent to the monorail

GAGS

- Moe's Bar – the slot machine, the love tester, the jar of pickled eggs and the 'Flaming Homers' on the bar
- The Legitimate Businessman's Social Club – the rat milking machine on the roof, up the fire escape
- The catapult in the town square
- The cement truck near the construction site
- The kiddie ride in front of Try-N-Save
- The missile behind Herman's Military Antiques
- DMV – take a picture of Hans Moleman

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

What? Did someone say wasp??!

Every level has 20 hidden wasp cameras in it and it's up to you to smash 'em all. Watch out though, because while they're easy to dispatch in the first few levels, they get a lot more agile and tougher towards the end. Stupid bug, you go squish now!



- The dumpster behind the Krusty Burger, near the police station

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at Moe's or the Department of Motor Vehicles, and Gil will sell you the bonus cars near the Police Station.

MONORAIL

- Get onto the monorail station and jump onto the track to get into the monorail car.

LEVEL 3 BONUS MISSION

- Find Principal Skinner down the hill and around the corner from Wall E. Weasel. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these.

- Race 1 – Find Millhouse at the Squidport, near the C-Spanker
- Race 2 – Find Nelson at the Springfield Gasoline up the street from the Aztec Theatre
- Race 3 – Find Ralph in front of the Duff Brewery
- Wager Race – Look for one of Fat Tony's henchmen at Ye Olde Off-Ramp Inn

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Angel Skeleton – On the roof of Android's Dungeon. Go around the building towards Wall E. Weasel's until you find a vent that will send you up there
- Bart's Soul – Floating above Barney's Bowl-A-Rama. Jump onto the roof from behind and double jump off the blue beam closest to the Pinmaker 2000
- Lisa Lionheart – At the top of the Squidport lighthouse
- Lisa's Valentine – On the stern of the C-Spanker
- Lisa's Machine – Above the Krusty set in KrustyLu Studios, the coins should lead you up there
- Evil Braces – On the face of Springfield Dam, use the broken railing section to get down there
- Soy Pop – Jump the broken bridge at the dam but don't overshoot the landing area. Get out, and double jump to the large rock overlooking Kamp Krusty

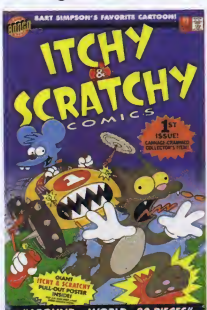
WASP CAMERAS

- On the roof of the building beside Android's Dungeon
- On top of Barney's Bowl-A-Rama
- On the sandy area under the Squidport
- The roof of Planet Hype
- In front of the lighthouse
- On the rear of the C-Spanker, near the stairs

THAT HAPPY CAT

Nope, we're not talking about Snowball

Find all the secret cards in every level and you'll unlock a bonus *Itchy and Scratchy* cartoon called "500 Yard Gash" that you can view at any time by going to the Aztec Theatre. Every time you find all the cards in a particular level you'll also unlock a special multiplayer game.



- On the bow of the C-Spanker
- Beside the hot pants crane on the side of the ship
- In the Duff Brewery
- Two on the Duff blimp pad
- One on the Krusty set, one on the Springfield News set
- On the road near Ye Olde Off-Ramp Inn
- Top floor balcony of Ye Olde Off-Ramp Inn
- Near the Springfield Observatory
- Two at Kamp Krusty
- Over the broken railing section on the face of Springfield Dam, and if you continue through to the elevator, you'll find another

GAGS

- Android's Dungeon – Robot at the back of the store and Radioactive Man beside the entrance
- Drop the ball at Wall E. Weasel's restaurant
- Dumpster between Krusty Burger and Noiseland Arcade
- Springfield Observatory – the alarm, the telescope, the perpetual motion machine on the desk and the monkey in the teleporter
- Kamp Krusty – the flag and the pig's head
- The C-Spanker – use the crane to drop the load of hot pants. Who wears short shorts?

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at Android's Dungeon or Springfield Observatory, and Gil will sell you the bonus cars down by the C-Spanker.

KNIGHT BOAT

- The crime solving boat can be found in one of the green containers towards the rear of the C-Spanker.

LEVEL 4 BONUS MISSION

- Find Comic Book Guy near Springfield Cemetery. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these races.

- Race 1 – Find Milhouse in front of Mr Burns' Mansion
- Race 2 – Find Nelson in front of the house where you found the rocket car
- Race 3 – Find Ralph near Springfield Cemetery
- Wager Race – Look for one of Fat Tony's henchmen in front of Springfield Elementary

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Mr Plow Jacket – Between Lard Lad Donuts and Springfield Gasoline, follow the coins up there
- Burns Portrait – Flick the switch in the upstairs room of Burns' Mansion and the card will be revealed
- Love Letter – On the rust-coloured bridge on the way to the power plant, park a car beside the small platforms at the power plant end and jump up, make your way to the other side and slide down
- Homer Bowling Ball – On top of a tower beside the raised bridge between the 939/636 area code billboards. Jump on the vent and double jump to get the card
- Red Blazer – From the above bridge, drive towards Burns' Mansion. Near a Springfield Gasoline sign is a jump. Hit that jump and stop on the building you land on. Use the box or your car to reach the card
- Boudoir Album – The Simpson backyard's treehouse.
- Pepper Spray – On the roof of a trailer in the Royal King Trailer Park. Follow the coins and mind the jumps. Mmmmm... incapacitating

WASP CAMERAS

- The Flanders' backyard
- Two in the Simpsons' other neighbour's yard
- Two in the Wiggums' yard, down from the Flanders'
- Two in the Royal King Trailer Park
- In the field beside the cow barn
- Outside Homer's workstation in the power plant

- Two on the chessboard in Burns' backyard
- One on the staircase in Burns' Mansion, one in the library
- On the tower beside the raised bridge between the area code billboards
- Two on top of the school, one behind the school
- The roof of the Kwik-E-Mart
- One on the roof of Springfield Gasoline beside the Kwik-E-Mart, one on the pumps themselves

GAGS

- Simpsons' house – the TV, the swing set, the BBQ, the tiki and the Krusty lamp in Bart's room (go through the highlighted window on the back of the house)
- Flanders' house – the comet shelter
- Power Plant – the tank in the parking lot, the lever in Homer's workstation
- Springfield Elementary – the fire extinguisher and alarm
- Kwik-E-Mart – the Squishee machine, Frostlicious, the silent alarm, the ATM, Larry the Looter

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at Springfield Elementary, the Kwik-E-Mart or Bart's room. Gil will sell you the bonus cars near the Royal King Trailer Park and Willy will sell you his Tractor at the school.

ATV

- There's a blue ATV in the Royal King Trailer Park at the far end, between two trailers on the right hand side.

LEVEL 5 BONUS MISSION

- Find Professor Frink in front of the Java Server Cafe. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these races.

- Race 1 – Find Milhouse near the car wash
- Race 2 – Find Nelson near the fire truck downtown
- Race 3 – Find Ralph in front of the Springfield County Court House
- Wager Race – Look for one of Fat Tony's henchmen near the downtown Krusty Burger

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Apu's T-shirt – Past the Krusty Burger at the construction site. Either use the jump and stop in the unfinished building, or use the elevator on the other side. Jump across the girders to get the card
- Pin Pals Shirt – In front of the entrance to the Legitimate Businessman's Social Club
- Proposition 24 Sign – On the roof of Moe's Bar. Park a Quimby truck in front and use it to get on the roof
- Baby Feeder – In the rail yard. Get on the carriages the same way you did as Bart but go across the metal pipes under the water tower and turn right
- Chutney Squishee – Get to the roof of the building near Krusty burger using the vents. Make your way across the walkway in front of the billboard to the card. The last platform drops when you walk on it so watch out
- Ganesh Costume – Floating over the edge of one of the unfinished sections of the Matlock Expressway. Get on from the downtown end and take the first on ramp on the



DOUGH FOR D'OH!

How to really start "buzzin'!"

There's plenty of coins about and you'll need to collect 'em all if you want to purchase all the goodies. Get an eye out for Buzz cola machines and Buzz cash boxes if you want to spend up big.

Bart Simpson: not the most convincing ninja we've come across



right. Stick to the left to grab the card

- Filth Encrusted Hot Dog – Get on the monorail platform and across the track to the building on the other side. Now jump on the other end of the track to get the card

WASP CAMERAS

- The steps of Town Hall
- The Hospital lawn
- In front of the Natural History Museum
- Near a gazebo close to the museum
- Two on the Legitimate Businessman's Social Club roof
- On top of Moe's
- Near the stairs in the rail yard
- On the first set of carriages in the rail yard
- On the first carriage opposite the water tower
- On the other carriage near the water tower
- Two next to the Sit and Rotate Room tower (one on each side)
- In front of the monorail stairs
- On the monorail
- Two on the building beside the monorail track
- In front of the police station
- Building's roof beside the downtown Krusty Burger
- In front of Springfield Stadium

GAGS

- Moe's Bar – the slot machine, the love tester, the jar of pickled eggs and the 'Flaming Homers' on the bar
- DMV – take a photo of Moleman
- The Krusty Burger dumpster near the police station

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at Moe's or the Department of Motor Vehicles, Gil will sell you the bonus cars near the Police Station and Homer will sell you 'The Homer' near the Hospital.

MONSTER TRUCK

- You should see this little gem sitting peacefully beside Springfield Stadium.

LEVEL 6 BONUS MISSION

- Find Snake near Springfield Gasoline up from the Aztec Theatre. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these races.

- Race 1 – Find Milhouse down near Mr Burns' Casino
- Race 2 – Find Nelson at the Aztec Theatre
- Race 3 – Find Ralph at Springfield Observatory
- Wager Race – Look for one of Fat Tony's henchmen near Kamp Krusty

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Radioactive Man #1 – Floating above the street just down the hill from Android's Dungeon and Nolseland Arcade. Grab an 'Itchy and Scratchy: The Movie' truck, park it underneath and jump on top of the speakers to reach it
- 'BORT' License Plate – Make the jump in front of Mr Burns' Casino. Don't go too fast or you'll fall over the top
- Bart T-shirt – On top of Planet Hype down by the Squidpoot. The sign spins so jump on it and ride it around to grab the card
- Australia Boot – On the C-Spanker. You'll need to hitch a ride on the crane near the Android's Dungeon billboard. Walk around the bow and you'll see it on some containers
- Itchy and Scratchy Cel – Near the Duff Blimp in the Brewery. Jump on the blimp from the boxes as it sinks
- Gabbo Doll – Down the hill from Ye Olde Off-Ramp Inn, past the open pipe and behind some bushes
- Bart's Flying Hamster Science Project – Jump the unfinished bridge over the dam; it's floating there, so stick to the left

WASP CAMERAS

- Roof of a building next to Android's Dungeon
- Roof of the other building beside Android's Dungeon
- On top of Barney's Bowl-A-Rama
- On top of Planet Hype
- In front of the lighthouse
- Two beside the stairs towards the C-Spanker's stern
- Next to the crane on the C-Spanker
- In the Duff Brewery
- On the Duff blimp pad
- Two on the Krusty set (jump on the fans and over the wall for the second)
- On the Springfield News set
- At Ye Olde Off-Ramp Inn
- Two outside the observatory
- Two at Kamp Krusty
- Over the broken railing section on the face of Springfield Dam, and if you continue through to the elevator, you'll find another

GAGS

- Android's Dungeon – Robot at the back of the store and Radioactive Man beside the entrance
- Drop the ball at Wall E. Weasel's restaurant
- Dumpster between Krusty Burger and Nolseland
- Springfield Observatory – the alarm, the telescope, the perpetual motion machine and, don't forget, the monkey in the teleporter
- Kamp Krusty – the flag and the pig's head
- The C-Spanker – use the crane to drop the load!

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at Android's Dungeon or Springfield Observatory, Gil will sell you the bonus cars down by the C-Spanker and Kearney will sell you a car in KrustyLu Studios.

PINK CADILLAC

- Hans Moleman's pink cadillac is stuck in the side of Planet Hype, so drop down into it to drive it.

LEVEL 7 BONUS MISSION

- Talk to Smithers. He's hanging out in front of the Kwik-E-Mart. You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing this fairly tough mission.

RACES

You'll unlock a bonus vehicle for completing these.

- Race 1 – Find the zombie across the street from the Kwik-E-Mart
- Race 2 – Find the zombie staggering around in front of the gutted church
- Race 3 – Find the zombie in front of Springfield Elementary
- Wager Race – Look for one of Fat Tony's henchmen at the power plant

COLLECTOR CARDS

- Soul Donut – On top of the Flanders' comet shelter
- Krusty Doll – In the park down the street from the Simpson house; jump on the monkey bars to reach slide
- Human Cookbook – On the slide in the Springfield Elementary playground; jump on the bus to get up there
- Time Travel Toaster – On top of the new and deliciously evil looking Lard Lad
- Hell Toupee – You'll find Snake's hair in the newly opened section of Springfield Cemetery. Jump across the floating coffins
- Monkey's Paw – On top of the silo beside the barn found between Cletus' shack and the power plant. Jump up the hay bales and follow the coins
- Smarch Calendar – In Burns' office, above where a UFO has crashed into the power plant. It might take a while to successfully jump up there. Damn Smarch weather.

WASP CAMERAS

- One on the fence between the Simpsons' and the Flanders', one in the Flanders' backyard
- The Simpsons' other neighbour's yard
- The playground on Evergreen Terrace
- In the Wiggums' backyard
- On top of the Kwik-E-Mart
- On the roof of Lard Lad Donuts
- On the roof Springfield Gasoline near the Kwik-E-Mart
- On the roof of Krusty Burger near the Kwik-E-Mart
- Two on the roof of Springfield Elementary
- One behind Springfield Elementary in the playground, one on the baseball diamond
- The blocked road on the other side of the school
- On top of the rust-coloured bridge on the way to the power plant
- Two on top of trailers in the Royal King Trailer Park
- On the roof of the silo beside the barn. Let it shoot at you to make it follow you down to ground level
- In the power plant car park
- In Burns' office, above the crashed UFO

GAGS

- Simpsons' house – the TV, the swing set, the tiki, the Krusty lamp in Bart's room and the clown bed in Bart's room (go through the highlighted window on the back of the house)
- Flanders' house – the comet shelter
- Power Plant – the tank in the parking lot and the lever in Homer's workstation
- Springfield Elementary – the fire extinguisher and the fire alarm
- Kwik-E-Mart – the Squishee machine, Frostilloclous, the silent alarm, the ATM and Larry the Looter

EXTRAS

- You can pick up the extra clothing for this level at the Kwik-E-Mart or the School, Gil will sell you the bonus cars across from Lard Lad Donuts and a zombie in the cemetery will sell you the Zombie Car.

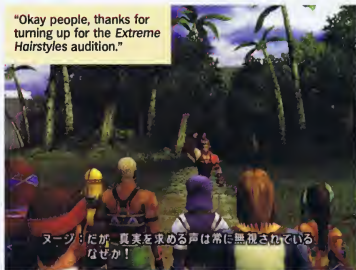
RC CAR

- On top of the Krusty Burger near the Kwik-E-Mart. Find a way onto the roof to get it.

Do we really want to know what Bart's spotted on the back of Apu's pants?



"Okay people, thanks for turning up for the Extreme Hairstyles audition."



"Nice straps."
"Thanks. Your girle's quite striking too."



"By the power of Greyskull!"



FINISHING'S NO LONGER A FANTASY!

FINAL FANTASY X-2

Create the most powerful, and snappily dressed RPG character ever with our guide!

FFX-2 WARNINGS

Don't say we didn't tell you...

NOTE

With each chapter, the missions assigned with each area change. For the purposes of percentage points, and to cover the story more completely, we'll be describing more areas than absolutely necessary. Feel free to skip over the parts you're not interested in doing.

NOTE 2

Most treasure chest locations have been left out of this guide. You're on your own for that one.

HOT TIP

A white mage in your party is a very good thing to have indeed. The most basic arrangement is: Yuna as white mage, Rikku as thief, and Paine as warrior. That way, for most battles, Yuna can do all the healing, Paine can do the whacking, and Rikku can steal stuff.

Final Fantasy X-2 - taking hot chicks in stupid outfits to new territory



LUCA

After the game's opening movie, you will have control of Rikku and Paine, and the first thing you will have to do is fight Yuna and two mysterious goons. There will be time enough to figure out the battle system later - for the time being, simply use attack when the ATB bars at the bottom fill up. After you've won the battle, you can tweak the battle settings to the way you like them.

Then, you'll need to chase down Yuna and reclaim a dressphere. On the way, off to the left on one of the docks, there's a giant moogle you can approach to restore your health. Do it anyway for percentage points. Continue on to fight your rival sphere hunters, Leblanc, Logos and Ormli.

CELSIUS

You'll find yourself onboard the Gullwings' airship - the Celsius. Have a prow around and get acquainted with everyone and everything on board. Talk to everyone and read through everything Shinra has to tell you for percentage points. You'll be given some AI Bhed primers - remember those? - and a garment grid.

When you leave the Bridge, you'll see a save sphere just outside the door. Save if you want; but since you'll be coming back this way, it doesn't really matter.

Go and have a poke around the rest of the ship - most notably, the Engine Room, where you'll find treasure boxes, and the Cabin, where you'll need to talk to the Hypello Barkeep in order to rest and thus advance the story. Return to the Bridge, and talk to Buddy to go to Mount Gagazet Ruins.

MOUNT GAGAZET RUINS

Follow Rikku and Paine down the ledge. You'll get a brief tutorial on jumping. So jump around a bit, grab some treasure, and save when you get to the save sphere. It's one-way from the elevator, so you can't go back.

A little distance on, you'll have to fight Leblanc, Logos and Ormli again. After you've chewed them up and spat them out, a new mission will be triggered - you have six minutes to get to the top of Mount Gagazet. Don't worry - that's plenty of time.

Once you get to the top, you will have your first boss fight, after which you will receive the sphere you were after - hurray! MISSION COMPLETE!

You'll be back onboard the Celsius. Comfort Brother for some percentage points, and talk to Shinra to watch the sphere and receive another dressphere. Then go talk to Buddy - it's time to hit Besaid.

BESAIID ISLAND

Head for the village, and you'll run into Wakka. Chat with him for a bit, then go find Lulu. Talk to Lulu twice, and accept her invitation to stay the night.

In the morning, talk to Lulu again, and offer to find Wakka for her. Then talk to all the townsfolk for clues about the cave where Wakka might have gone.

When you think you have enough intel, leave the village and head up towards the road. The first two cipher door numbers are on pillars on the roadway, and the second two are on the beach - they should appear on your



"What do you mean you're trading me in for a new teddy bear?"



map, so they're not hard to find. Then go to the door, and enter the numbers in the order that they appear on the top of the screen.

Wakka's inside the cave. Chat to him, then go deeper into the cave to trigger your second boss fight. Beat the boss (having a black mage helps, but it's not necessary), and collect your prize. **MISSION COMPLETE!**

Zanarkand is the next place to go to advance the game, but we're going to explore first. So go back to the Celsius, and tell Buddy to set a course for Luca.

LUCA

After the movie sequence, head down the stairs and talk to the balloon guy to trigger a mission to hand out ten balloons. You'll then get the rest of the story that you missed out on in the opening movie. **MISSION COMPLETE!** We're not done yet, so go back to Luca and head for the stadium. Talk to the kid in the bird-mask for instructions on the Sphere Break minigame and to receive some Sphere Break coins. Play a little if you feel like it. Then head out to the docks and explore around for any treasures - there's a pretty decent Garment Grid lying around. You'll probably also see the theatre, but you probably can't afford the spheres just yet. When you're done, go back up to the first save sphere, and head up the stairs to the Mi'ihen Highroad.

MI'IHEN HIGHROAD

At this point in the game, the Mi'ihen Highroad is only really good for finding treasure and getting experience and gil. Take a run down the road, and get a proper feel for the Garment Grid system and the Active Time Battle system. Grab any treasure along the way. Don't sweat it if you miss stuff - most of it's not too exciting anyway. Head back to the Celsius.

MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD

Get Buddy to drop you off at Mushroom Rock Road. Head up the road, and follow Ormi and Logos when you see them. You'll be intercepted by the Youth League. Tell Yalbal you remember him, and tell him you are ready to go. You don't have to follow immediately - there's treasure around - but once you're done, all you have to do is talk to the Youth League again, and you're all set.

Head left, and take the lift up. If you follow the path, you will see Ormi and Logos again. Follow them. If you lose them, you can just follow the red arrow on the map. Go into the cave, and after the brief scene, go up and touch the statue. There will be another scene. Go out of the cave, and back out of the crevasse, and follow the road around to the right, and take the lift at the end, up to Youth League HQ. Just to the right of the save sphere outside HQ is a small wiggly path on the side of the cliff - you should see it on the map. There's a treasure box down there. Grab it if you want, then head towards the big tent. Once there, talk to Lucil twice. Then talk to the old man named Maechen, sitting a little off to the right. Let him talk

the whole thing out from beginning to end without saying a word (you can get up for a pee if you want - this guy is long-winded), and shake his hand at the end. This will give you some

percentage points.

Go back to the Celsius, and get dropped off directly at Mushroom Rock Road again. Clasko is off to the right, at the edge of the cliff. Talk to him, and let him on your airship. Go back to the ship yourself, and talk to Shinra to watch your Crimson Sphere. Also, go talk to Clasko in the Cabin. Then go talk to Buddy. We're off to Kilika.

KILIKA ISLAND

There's a few treasures in boats, but nothing exciting. Go into the town. You'll see a woman with some kids and a monkey. Make your way over to her, and she'll ask you to find some more monkeys in the forest. You can't do it yet, so instead go up to the next screen, and go towards the hut on the upper level to the left. After the short scene, go inside for another scene, and some treasure upstairs. Also, there's a guy with a telescope on the lower far right-hand side of this area. Talk to him to look at the new Youth League HQ.

When you've finished looking around for treasure boxes, go back to the Celsius. Next stop is Djose Temple.

DJOSE TEMPLE

Watch the cutscene, and then talk to the people standing around until the registration line goes down. Then go and register. Head into the temple, and talk to Gippal, and grab any treasures while you're in there.

Head outside and to the next screen. You'll have another short scene. Tell Gippal you're sure in order to get the Letter of Introduction. Then head across the bridge and up towards the Moonflow.

MOONFLOW

Follow the road all the way along until you see a kid in a red outfit and a bird-mask (Tobli). Talk to him for percentage points. Then head back to where you saw a Hypello with a wagon, and talk to him to trigger a new mission.

If the wagon stops, walk ahead a little way and it will start again. If the bandits get anything from the wagon, it will affect your percentage, so try to intercept them before they get there. The mission ends when you get to the screen where Tobli is. **MISSION COMPLETE!**

Keep going, and speak to the Hypello near the shoopufs to get a ride across to Guadosalam.

Bjorn the Nobhead was feared by all



GUADOSALAM

Go to the top of the city for a short scene. You can't get into the main house, so instead take the left exit on the bottom of the city up into the Thunder Plains.

THUNDER PLAINS

Watch the scene, and head through the Thunder Plains towards Macalania, grabbing any treasures you see along the way.

MACALANIA WOODS

Talk to everyone standing around in the first area. Then head right to the next screen. Go past the fork in the road, and at the next screen, go down to the lake. Talk to the guy standing there.

Go back to where the path and the glitter bridge are, and take the path. Along the way, you'll see a strange girl with a trumpet. Talk to her, and continue on till you get to a crossroads. Take the upper right path, and speak with Tromell four times to get Paine's special dressphere. Go back to the crossroads, and take the upper left path for a small scene. When you leave this area, you will have triggered a new mission. Go back to the crossroads, and take the lower left path. Follow the glitter bridge all the way back, and go right to the second crossroads again. This time, go up. O'aka is hiding around the corner. Let him hide on the Celsius. **MISSION COMPLETE!** Go back to the Celsius. Go talk to O'aka in the Cabin. Next is Bevelle.

"I guess you're asking why we're meeting outside of the spaceship?"



The final boss can only be beaten by singing really badly at him



BEVELLE

Head straight for the New Yevon HQ, and speak to Baralai on the way. Then go inside and take the lift up to speak with Baralai again. Now, back to the Celsius. Next stop: Mount Gagazet.

MOUNT GAGAZET

After scouting around for treasure, speak to Kimahri. Tell him that you'll take care of Lian and Ayde. Then speak to all the other Ronso. Try to be agreeable and sympathetic. There is also a Ronso in a cave at the top of the mountain. Either teleport or walk up there to talk to him, and tell him you hope it's a change for the better. Go back to the Celsius, and set a course for the Calm Lands.

CALM LANDS

Run around and check out all the amusements and minigames. There are also a couple of side-quests here that you can only do in Chapter One, so make sure you explore everything pretty thoroughly before heading back to the Celsius. The advertising sidequest goes towards your percentage. Now it's time for a little excavation work.

BIKANEL DESERT

If you want 100% completion, DO NOT do any digging outside of missions until Chapter Five. When Rikku takes off, follow her, until eventually you get a small scene. When you regain control, you'll be in an Al Bhed camp. Go talk to Rikku and Paine, and then talk to everyone in the camp to trigger Nhadala's arrival. Show Nhadala Gippal's



"Do you think anyone's noticed my tattoo yet?"

ルアラール スターを教いに出発だよ!

letter and receive a new mission.

Speak with the hover pilot to go to the Western Expanse to dig up machine parts. The first time you do this, it is for mission purposes. You'll get a short tutorial. Afterwards, you can go dig stuff up as much as you want. When you get back to camp, Nhadala will give you your reward. MISSION COMPLETE!

Return to the Celsius. We're finally going to Zanarkand.

ZANARKAND RUINS

After watching the introduction, you'll get a new mission: find the treasure sphere. Walk ahead, and go to the top of the hill to speak to Isaaru. Then head down towards Zanarkand.

Enter the building and follow the path. Eventually you'll catch up with some kids and speak with them. Then keep following the path, taking out the goons along the way, to the old Zanarkand temple. In the second area, examine the monkeys near the screen.

Take the lift down, and deeper in the temple is Cid. Tell him that you do indeed have a bone to pick, and talk to the other guy in the chamber to open the next door. Keep going, grabbing treasure chests along the way. A voice will ask you the meaning of life. Answer, "Is that you, Isaaru?" After the scene, keep following the path for a sphere and a boss battle. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll find yourself back on the Celsius, and after a little story, you'll be heading down to Kilika Island to find the "Awesome Sphere".

KILIKA ISLAND

Head straight for the far end of the town, stopping to talk to Dona along the way, towards the gate to Kilika Woods, where you're now allowed through. After a couple of scenes, you'll have a new mission – to nab the Awesome Sphere [duh].

Parts of the woods are blocked off by New Yevon guards, so you'll have to find alternate routes. Whenever you hear a sound like a monkey squeaking, press the X button – these are the monkeys that the woman in town asked you to find. You can't take them to her yet, but grab them anyway. There are 13 in all.

In the top left area of the woods is a spyhole that lets you find out the password through to the temple, based on the number of guards. If there is an odd number of guards, the password is "Carved Monkey". If there is an even

number of guards, the password is "Craven Monkey". Head to the temple, and give the password to the guards at each of the four checkpoints. You will have to give it twice at the last checkpoint – wait a few seconds before giving it the second time, as more guards join the party, and you will have to adjust your answer accordingly. Then make sure you're healthy and ready for a fight, because you're going up the stairs to fight another boss. Get up there, and give 'em hell. MISSION COMPLETE!

CELSIUS

You won't get to keep the Awesome Sphere, so speak to Shinra to watch it. Then speak to Brother for another scene.

Each chapter, the treasure chests in the Celsius are reset, so run down to the Engine Room and grab the four treasures in there. Then head to the cabin and rest. After you've rested, speak to the last musician – you'll have to push them into the elevator. This will trigger the next scene and an interesting FMV. Watch it, then head for the bridge once you're back in control.

You'll have to decide to whom you're going to give the Awesome Sphere. If you give it to the Youth League, you'll be attacked by New Yevon if you enter Bevelle. If you give it to New Yevon, you'll be attacked if you go to Mushroom Rock Road or Youth League HQ, and you won't be able to get 100% completion. So, we're giving it to Youth League for guide purposes.

After the scene, you'll need to acquire three FemGoon uniforms. As in the last chapter, you can go straight there, or you can have some fun along the way. We're going for fun. If you're a big spoilsport, skip the next few areas and go straight to the Djose Highroad. We're going to Besaid.

BESAIID ISLAND

The Besaid Aurochs are under new management – by the Youth League, and a smug little git called Beclan is in charge. Accept his challenge.

The Gunner's Gauntlet can get a little difficult, but it's fun, so keep going till you get it. The gauge on the bottom of the screen counts how many fiends you've killed without getting hit – the more full it is, the more points you get per kill. Get to the beach and rub Beclan's nose in it. MISSION COMPLETE!

There's a treasure chest under the first bridge in that area, so go back for it if you want. Then, it's onwards to Kilika.

KILIKA ISLAND

Grab the treasures in boats, and go towards Kilika. You'll see a brief scene with Dona. You can't get into Kilika, so go back to the Celsius.

LUCA

Go down the steps, jumping across to grab the chest on the way. There'll be a small scene. Answer the question however you want to get the item, and head back to the Celsius.

MI'IHEN HIGHROAD

Go into the travel agency to trigger a short scene. Then follow the girl (Calli) outside the cliff and talk to her. Tell her you'll help catch a chocobo.

Rikku will run down the path and stop three times along the way. Of course, she has no idea. The third time she stops, there's no chocobo, but there is a chest, so stop and grab it if you want. This will restart the mission, so run down the road again without following her advice at all. You will run into the chocobo, which will eventually escape, so head off after it grabbing the treasures along the way. The chocobo will get away again, so talk to the lady at the hover vehicle twice to enlist her aid in catching the chocobo.

After the chocobo has been caught, you'll see a scene of Calli in trouble. Run down the path, grabbing treasures on the way. Then, it's boss time. MISSION COMPLETE!

We weren't finished there! Get buddy to drop you off at the Mi'ihen Highroad again, and talk to Clasko near the travel agency to get Calli and the chocobo on your airship. Then it's off to Mushroom Rock Road.

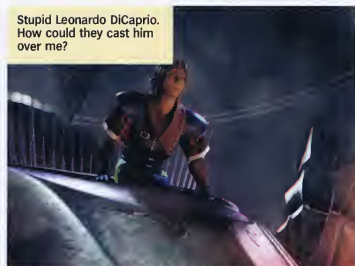
That guy's got to be pretty unlucky. He's not even standing under a tree



It looks like lightning can strike twice



Stupid Leonardo DiCaprio. How could they cast him over me?



MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD

Go up to the small lift [you remember, right?] to grab the two treasure boxes. Then go back to the fork that leads off to Youth League HQ.

After a short scene, Youth League guys will want to escort you to Youth League HQ. Humour them until Buddy calls. Then head for the Den of Woes, where there will be another short scene, and you will receive a sphere. Go back to the Youth League escort, and head for Youth League HQ. Don't worry too much about waking the fiends – they're not much of a challenge.

When you get to the save sphere, go down the little path to the right again for a pretty good item. Then head for the tent for a brief scene, talk to everyone at HQ, and then head back to the airship.

Watch the sphere, and get Buddy to drop you off at Mushroom Rock Road again. This time, we're taking the fork that leads to the Djose Highroad.

DJOSE HIGHROAD

Head straight up towards the Djose Highroad for a new mission – to snatch the lost sphere and nab a uniform while you're at it.

The sphere is a little way along in front of a pillar on the right. It's the glowy orange thing – you can't miss it. Grab it to get Yuna's special dressphere and trigger a mini-boss fight with Ormi and Logos. Make them cry like little girls. MISSION COMPLETE!

You'll be back onboard the Celsius. Point it towards the Moonflow.

MOONFLOW

Head right one screen and talk to Tobli. Now you'll have to sell concert tickets – yippeee! The best part is, you can make some serious gil by selling the tickets at a profit. So, here is a list of 10 people you can sell to, and how much you can sell the tickets for:

1. Near where you found the Hypello with the wagon earlier is a woman in red. She'll buy a ticket for 1500 gil.
2. In the area where Tobli is, you'll see a woman on the left with a red headband. Sell her a ticket for 1500 gil.
3. Head left to the next screen where you'll see a woman with an orange skirt. She'll pay 1500 gil.
4. The guy sitting on the steps in the shoopuf area will buy a ticket for 1500 gil.
5. The guy in green to the left of the steps in the same area will pay 2000 gil.
6. Take the shoopufs across the water and speak to the kid next to the Hypello. He'll pay 2000 gil.
7. The girl up the ramp in the yellowish dress will pay 2000 gil.
8. On the next screen left will be a guy wearing green standing next to a Hypello. He'll pay 2000 gil.
9. In the next area, the guy next to the old woman will pay 2000 gil.
10. The guy in blue and white in the same area will pay 1500 gil.

MISSION COMPLETE! Now let's hit Guadosalam.

"Take me to your Costume Designer!"



For a small girl, she sure can eat. She didn't even bother plucking the chicken



GUADOSALAM

Go up to the main door and talk to the goons, who still won't let you in. Now, there's a trick here to getting a lot of gil. This will help when it comes time to pay off O'aka's debt.

Go to the save point and save the game. Then head down the stairs around to the right. The guy in there is selling information. Buy the info from him, and talk to him to get hints. If the hints are, "It's the last person you'd expect, no question" and "It's the closest person you can find", hit square to sell him the data for 100,000 gil. If the hints aren't right, you can just reset the game and try again till you get it. Then head for the Thunder Plains from Guadosalam.

THUNDER PLAINS

You'll see an AI Bhed at the first tower. Go and talk to him to initiate the tower calibration mini-game. You'll also find Cid on the right before you get to the Travel Agency. He appears as a purple cross on your map. Go talk to him.

There are ten towers in all. To get the prize from the AI Bhed, you have to attempt to calibrate all ten and successfully calibrate five. One of the towers is a little hard to locate. After the travel agency, walk along the left edge until you find it for a little calibration via remote. Grab any treasures you find in the area, and then head out of the Thunder Plains and into the Macalania Woods.

"I can't believe I'm hanging out in the gumnut version of an Ewok village..."



MACALANIA WOODS

Speak to the Hypello near the entrance to trigger the mission. You have to find him some musicians. So make your way to where you spoke with Tromell in Chapter One, and talk to the dude there. He'll tell you how to find the others.

Go up the glitter bridge, and find the musician on the way. When you reach the entrance to Macalania, go two screens to the right and take to path down. Follow the waterline to find the second musician. Then go speak to the dude again. MISSION COMPLETE!

Go back to the Celsius, and then back to the entrance of Macalania Woods to get your reward from the Hypello. Then go back to the Celsius. It's time to get back on track and chase down another uniform.

BIKANEL DESERT

If you want 100% completion, DO NOT do any digging outside of missions until Chapter Five. Speak to Nhadala, and then speak to the hover pilot twice to go to the Oasis. When you get there, you'll see a sphere. It's Rikku's special dressphere - woot! Go grab it, and give Logos the smackdown. MISSION COMPLETE! Now let's go to the Calm Lands to get sidetracked again.

CALM LANDS

If you took Clasko onboard earlier, you'll see a brief scene, and he'll run off to the old monster arena. Follow him, and talk to him. Tell him you'll help, to activate a new mission. Now you have to clean the fiends out of the arena. You'll notice that most of them are ghosts. You can tell which is the real fiend because the ghost fiends will all be looking towards it. Eliminate the five fiends, then go back to Clasko and beat the last fiend. MISSION COMPLETE!

Go back into the arena and talk to Clasko to get some greens. Now you can catch chocobos when you see them in battle! You need one by the end of Chapter Three for percentage points, so head for the Calm Lands travel agency, and see if you can catch one on the way. You'll find Lian and Ayde at the Travel Agency. Talk to them. Then head for Mount Gagazet.

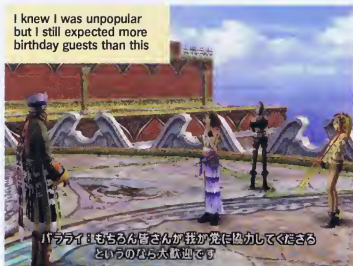
Lamest fireworks ever!



"That's it Britney, make love to the microphone."



I knew I was unpopular but I still expected more birthday guests than this



MOUNT GAGAZET

There are a couple of chests in the area between Mount Gagazet and the Calm Lands. Go talk to Kimahri. Talk to him again, and tell him he'll have to figure it out on his own. Talk to all the other Ronso, too. Again, try to be sympathetic.

Now head to the teleport pad and teleport to the Mountain Path. Follow the path a little way, and you'll see a FemGoon. Don't follow her straight away – keep following the path instead, to go into a cave and speak to the last Ronso. Tell him that better care should be kept of the mountain. Then head back to where you saw the FemGoon to continue with the mission.

Climb up the rock face. When you get to the top, you'll see an opening, and a treasure chest on a floating rock to the right of the opening. If you want it, you'll have to walk slowly across, and jump, still walking. If you run, the rock will move, and you have to try again. Then head through the opening. Follow the path along there's treasure, if you want to search for it. You'll see the FemGoon again, but don't follow her off to the right unless you want to miss a very odd cutscene and percentage points. Instead, go up the cliff face a little to the left. There are some treasure chests around if you want to go and find them. Otherwise, go right, right and then left to trigger off that scene. That was fun, wasn't it? Now beat the stuffing out of Ormi. MISSION COMPLETE! Now we're going to Zanarkand for a little monkey love

ZANARKAND RUINS

Make your way to the temple. There'll be a short scene. Keep going inside the temple (is there a need to mention the treasure chests along the way?), and eventually you'll run into Isaaru. Have a little chat with him to trigger a new mission: monkey matchmaker.

Yeah, you heard. You've gotta bring love to these little guys. It's pretty easy – the names give it away. Run around checking all the monkeys to find out their names until you find one with hearts over it. Pick it up, and take it to its soulmate. The area is quite extensive. You'll find the first monkey in the last screen of the monkey area. If you try to leave the area, Isaaru will take the monkey from you, and you'll have to go back to get it, so stay in the area until they all have partners.

Match the monkeys according to their names – for example, Summer is in love with Winter, and so on. If you can't figure it out, just check every monkey you come across until you find the right one. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll get a reward, and a rather disturbing poem about monkey love. Good stuff! Now let's head back to the Celsius for a little housekeeping.

CELSIUS

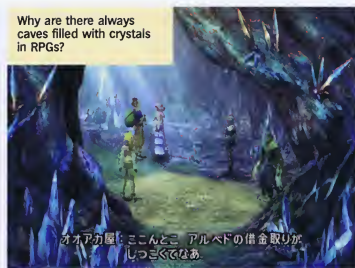
It's time to pay off O'aka's debt. This needs to be done by the end of the chapter for percentage points. So, go find O'aka and buy up whatever you want – Holy Water and Hi-Potions work the fastest. Don't worry about losing money, you can make it all back in a minute. Then go sell all the stuff to the Barkeep. Do this for as many times as necessary to pay off the debt.

Once you've paid off the debt, O'aka will sell you items dirt-cheap – so you can buy them from him, and then go sell them to the Barkeep for a profit. Do this now, until you have enough gil, or until you're bored with it, because O'aka leaves the alship in the next chapter. Now, go save. We're going to Guadosalam.

GUADOSALAM

Change your clothes and head for the big red door that's always been blocked off by goons. You now have access to Château LeBlanc – hooray! So go inside, and speak to Ormi and Logos inside the room on the bottom floor. Then go up the stairs to LeBlanc's room and give her a massage. If you get it right on your first

Why are there always caves filled with crystals in RPGs?



try, you get a better item.

When LeBlanc is satisfied, and you've spoken to Ormi and Logos, go back down to the room downstairs. Examine the door at the back left of the room to open the secret passage. Go in.

Follow the corridor, and open up a can of whup-ass on Ormi when you run into him. At the save sphere, go into the room and open the chest. How good this item is depends on whether LeBlanc was satisfied with your first massage attempt. Go back out into the corridor and into the next room – there is a sphere on the dresser. Take it, and take out Logos and Ormi.

Now the booby traps are armed. So go out, and keep heading down the corridor. When you reach a fork, turn left. Drop down into the pits to activate the security overrides. Then head for the end of that corridor. A spiked wall will come at you. Run away, jumping over the first pit, but falling into the second one. The split second the wall has passed over you, climb out of the pit. This will trigger a short scene, and you will be up on a high ledge. If you didn't get the timing right, the spikes will come out of the wall at intervals, so you can keep trying till you get it. Activate the final override, and go back to the wall where the spikes came from. You can now unlock the security door. Unlock it, and go through. Enter the round doorway on the right. Show LeBlanc, Ormi and Logos a thing or two about fighting. MISSION COMPLETE! After a cutscene, you will be going to Bevelle.

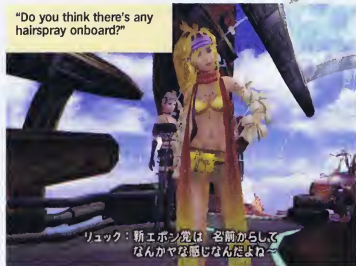
BEVELLE

Take out the guards and get your new mission – to find the Vegnagun. Head towards the temple, taking out any guards along the way. If you haven't skipped anything so far, you should be more than strong enough to beat them easily. Once inside the temple, go into the room on the right and climb onto the block to open a passage. Then go out into the main area, and head left. Climb into the opening, and touch the block closest to the screen to change the passage of the elevator.

Go take the elevator down. There are a few treasure boxes in this area, so have a good poke around before taking the next elevator. When you've taken the next elevator, go and save.

Then head into the next room. You'll see a big hole, which everyone will jump into, and then another quick scene. Walk along the edge of the ledge, and you will slide down

"Do you think there's any hairspray onboard?"



Even her guns are accessorised



a chain onto the centre area of the room. You can get back up if you need to by just running towards the chain. Take out the machina. You now have to deactivate the security towers. There are three blue and three red. Go round clockwise, going up the stairs and touching each tower to deactivate it. At each deactivation, you will have to fight a machina. At the last two – the last blue and the last red deactivation – you will have to fight a mini-boss. They are both weak against Holy, so use Paine's Excalibur move a lot, and they should go down easily. Now, if you look into the pit, you will see two orange doorways. The one you can get to advances the story. The one on the bottom leads to one of the best items in the game – the Ribbon. If you don't care, skip the next bit. To get the Ribbon, go back to the first tower (blue) and touch it. Since you have to fight the Precepts Guard mini-boss each time you do this, you might want to go back and save before you start. This will bring the bottom platform around. Keep deactivating the tower until it is in front of the bottom doorway. Then go touch the red tower to the right. Now you have to bring the next step around to form a staircase, so go to the next blue tower and repeat the process until you have a perfect path to the bottom doorway. Go through it to get the Ribbon. Now go back up to the other doorway, and, grabbing treasure on the way, run until you get to an intersection. Take the right path for treasure, and then to the left. You will see two pillars. Climb on top of each of them, and take the bridge onwards. There will be a large chunk of machinery. After a brief scene, go to the glyph behind Ormi and step on it. You can then go climb on the machine. This is entirely optional – it leads to a few treasure boxes. You can go get them or not; either way, when you're done, go back to the main floor area, and through the doorway on the left. Follow the corridor along, and you will come to an area with three elevators. Take the one on the right first. Get the treasure, and climb onto the two small blocks. Then, head towards the bottom of the room where the floor stops, and drop off the edge. You will be back at the central elevator platform. Take the middle elevator, and climb onto the block in this area. Then take the elevator back down. Finally, get into the elevator on the left-hand side. There is another lift in this area – jump in it, and it will take you back to the central elevator platform. Jump in the middle

elevator one more time, and climb on the block. Now go back down to the central platform, and take the right elevator back down to the bottom. Head over to the bridge and take the last lift. You should be at a save sphere. Save, and head on over the bridge, where you'll have to fight Baralai. There is a treasure chest on the bridge with a dressphere in it that all that climbing around on blocks should have made accessible. Whup Baralai's arse but good, and then go back and save before heading further down the corridor. The next boss might give you a bit of trouble. Go into the room at the end of the corridor, and fight Bahamut. You'll see a cutscene at the end. There's a new enemy in this chapter – the Watcher (Bufty, anyone?). These are little machina who record your battle data and transmit it to bosses later in the game. Moves you use often might then get locked out of boss battles, so when you see these guys, take them down hard and fast, and don't use any move but 'Attack' until they have exploded.

CELSIUS

As in the previous chapter, run down to the Engine Room and grab the treasure. Then go talk to everyone in the cabin. You'll notice that O'aka has jumped ship to go back to his shop. Rest. Then go talk to Buddy. There are three new hotspots. We'll get to those later. For now, we're going to Luca.

LUCA

It's a Sphere Break tournament! You can't advance in the tournament until you've won three games – before losing three games. You'll see a cutscene, and get some Sphere Break coins. Let's go rustle up some games. You can only play each person in Luca once, and they play at varying levels of difficulty. There are three people very easy to beat, so pick on them. There is a guy walking around the main square wearing brown and green. He has the Fresh Catch core sphere. Beat her him, and go save at the Blitzball Stadium locker room. There is an old man sitting on the path to the stadium, with the Grandpa core sphere. Beat him, and go save at the locker room again. Finally, just in front of the Stadium is a woman in a blue dress, with the Intimidator Sphere. After you've beaten her, you play for the title. There's no opportunity to save before the final game, so if you lose you'll have to play both games again. The prize

"I can't believe they don't have Tristis"



"I don't know. I just estimated The Tower of Flame to be a bit bigger"



for winning is a dressphere, which you can get later in the game, but it's MUCH easier to get it now, and this counts towards your percentage, so stick with it. When you've won, you can probably go buy up all the spheres at the theatre, if you did the O'aka gil trick before. Head back up the stairs, towards the Mi'ihen Highroad.

MI'IHEN HIGHROAD

It's a new mission – the machina are going haywire! Of course, the Gullwings aren't going to stand for that kind of thing. Run along the highroad, and if you see a machina bugging a person, go up and tell it to pick on someone its own size. Random battles don't count towards the total of 13 machina that need to be "de-activated". The crazy machina will appear on your map, so just run along the road taking them out, grabbing the treasure along the way, until 13 have been dealt with. You'll notice that the mission "disappears" temporarily when you enter the screen where the Travel Agency is, just run past it, and the mission will reappear on the next screen. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll find yourself back onboard the Celsius. Head for Mushroom Rock Road.

MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD

Speak to Yaibal and Lucil for percentage points, and go up the small lift to the left to grab some treasure. Then head back down and along the path to the Djose Highroad.

DJOSE HIGHROAD

Take the hover down the road, and head right at the crossroads towards Djose Temple. Speak to Gippal. Then

"I can't join your party because my outfit's not silly enough?"



"Um, let me think about it. I've never been asked out by a drag queen before"



head back to the crossroads and take the other path towards the Moonflow.

MOONFLOW

Find Tobli and speak to him twice. Then go to the shoopufts and take one to Guadosalam.

GUADOSALAM

Try to get into the house on the upper level on the left for a little scene. Then go speak to the goons outside Chateau LeBlanc. Enter the Chateau, and go into the room on the lower level to speak to Logos and Ormi. After that, head upstairs to talk to LeBlanc. Then head down and talk to Logos and Ormi again.

Enter the secret passage, and go into the room with the large blue sphere. You can open the treasure chest in here now. There's also a treasure chest with a sphere inside on the balcony – climb up the boxes on the left to get to it. Go out into the corridor, and past the save sphere and Ormi's room to get to Logos' room. Watch the cutscene, and talk to Logos again to get another sphere. After another movie, you'll see the old man from the Youth League HQ. Talk to him when he's finished rambling on, and then follow the secret passage out of the Chateau. Make for the Thunder Plains.

THUNDER PLAINS

Run through the plains, grabbing any treasure you see along the way. You'll also run into Cid, quite early on, on the left-hand side – again, he is a purple cross on your map. Talk to him.

After the Travel Agency, on the left-hand side, is a travellers' shelter. Lian and Ayde will be there. They are also marked with a purple cross on your map. If you didn't speak to them in the Calm Lands, though, they won't be here now. Talk to them. It doesn't matter where you tell them to go, it just determines where you will see them later in the game. Then head on towards the Macalania Woods.

MACALANIA WOODS

Follow the glitter bridge along until you get to the crossroads. Take the upper left path, where you'll trigger a mission to fight six consecutive battles, with no time to heal in between. If you choose to flee instead of fight between battles, you'll have to start the whole thing over. You should be strong enough, though, that this won't pose any problem at all. MISSION COMPLETE!

You'll see a brief scene with O'aka. There is a treasure to the left of the Travel Agency. Go into the agency, and over to the save sphere to get back onboard the Celsius.

BIKANEL DESERT

If you want 100% completion, DO NOT do any digging outside of missions until Chapter Five. Watch the scene, and then go speak to the pilot and get him to take you to Cactuar Nation. Go towards the cactus to trigger another scene, and tell her it makes perfect

Ouch. That's got to hurt!



sense in order to advance the story. You will then get a mission to find the ten Cactuar Gatekeepers. At this point in the game, we can only find six – the other four don't appear until Chapter Five.

To start looking, go find the Cactuar Mother that is awake – you will know it by the glowy green stuff around it. She will give you a clue as to where you can find the Gatekeeper. When you have it, take it back and the next mother will be awake. You have to find the Gatekeepers one at a time and in order. Here are the locations of the six you can get now:

1. In the Al Bhed camp, get the pilot to take you to the Oasis. The Cactuar is on the left. Talk to the Hypello before touching the Cactuar to see if he has any items you want to buy. Then, tackle the mini-game. Take the Cactuar back to the mother.
2. This Cactuar is sunbathing on the beach at Besaid. Make sure you don't enter the village if you don't want to set off story.
3. In Chateau LeBlanc, you'll find a funny chest



"Do you think the scarf's too much?"



リュック：スピラ中のスフィア
カメメ団がもらっちゃうよー？

It's like *Sex and the City* but without the sex and with even worse outfits



ルナ：いままでやめてるんだ
勘が先にさるよ

In Ormi's room, in the secret passage. The Cactuar is there.

4 & 5. There are two Cactuars riding a chocobo in the area where the Calm Lands meets Mount Gazet.

6. In the Thunder Plains, there is a Cactuar stone standing opposite the shelter where you saw Llan and Ayde. You'll see him nearby. After you've taken the sixth Gatekeeper back, make for the Celsius.

BEVELLE

Shinra will drop his CommSphere. Talk to everyone in the area, and then head back to the Celsius.

CALM LANDS

Select Calm Lands, Mission 2 from the airship menu. Go talk to Alasko, and then go into the upper area of the chocobo ranch so that Shinra can drop a CommSphere. Then go back to the airship and select Mission 1. Make sure you have plenty of Hi- and Mega-Potions.

You'll find yourself outside the Cavern of the Stolen Fayth, and you'll receive a mission to rescue 15 tourists trapped inside the cave. It is possible to get the first 13 out in one go, by talking to them to find out what their preferences are, but it doesn't matter if you make more than one trip. So, enter the cave, and get 13 people out. You'll see two teleport pads, one at the front and one at the back of the cave. These aren't activated, but the rescued people will give you power cores, so you can turn them back on.

When you have them out, go to the front teleport pad, and warp to the back of the cave. Then warp to either side to rescue the people trapped in the hidden cavern. You have

to do these guys one at a time. Then, make sure all your girls are equipped with a Poisonproof accessory. Go back to the pad at the back of the cave, and warp to the hidden chamber (up on the directional pad). You'll notice that you haven't been able to save, right? So, if this guy takes you out, you have to start all over again.

Go and fight Yojimbo. He's got some pretty devastating attacks, including one that wipes out all your MP so you'll be using lots of items to heal yourself with. Take him down. MISSION COMPLETE!

You'll be back on the Celsius. Select Mission 1 in the Calm Lands to be dropped off at the Travel Agency. Shinra will drop a CommSphere. There're a few treasures scattered around the Calm Lands, as well as the chest that you saw in the chamber where you fought Yojimbo. When you're done, make for Mount Gagazet.

MOUNT GAGAZET

Approach Kimahri for a short scene. Hopefully, you'll receive a dressphere. Agree to take on the mission. Head for the teleport pad to find out that it has been "fixed". There will be no warping for you, young lady! So, let's head up the mountain the old-fashioned way.

Along the way, you will come across the three destination pads. To reactivate them, simply step on them. Then, if you want, you can warp down to the foot of the mountain to heal up. Then just warp back to where you were.

After the third pad, save and heal, and head for the next scene for a boss battle. If you were sympathetic to the Ronso earlier, beating this guy should be a breeze. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll be back onboard the Celsius. Set a course for Zanarkand.

ZANARKAND RUINS

This time, we're going after treasure and percentage points. So head for the temple, grabbing the treasure along the way. Enter the temple, and you'll bump into Isaaru. Talk to him, and continue on, still treasure-hunting to the room with the six treasure chests. Then go back to the nearest save sphere, and back to the Celsius.

BESAID ISLAND

Go to Lulu's hut and talk to her. Exit the hut, and after a short scene, go talk to Beclum in the temple. This will trigger a new mission. Head deeper into the temple. You'll come across some treasure boxes and Wakka. Talk to him, and when you are ready, take the lift down and walk forward for another aeon

"I'm here to audition for the role of most ridiculously dressed cameo"



ベクレム：もう召喚獣はいないんだ
となれば、召喚士は役立たずさ

boss battle. This guy should be a piece of cake after Yojimbo. Just hit him until he falls. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll be on the airship, so go back to Besaid, and enter the temple. In the room on the right hand side is a treasure chest with the Search Sphere inside. This basically allows you to go treasure hunting. There's treasure to be found on Besaid, if you feel like having a play. At any rate, let's go to Kilika.

KILIKA ISLAND

If you found the 13 monkeys earlier in the game, you can go talk to the monkey lady for a reward. If you didn't, don't worry – you can go back and get them in Chapter Five. Also, go talk to the telescope guy on the right in the second area. There are a few treasure chests lying around the village, including one on Dona's roof. When you leave Dona's, you will be asked if you're ready for a mini-game. Go save before you play it – if you don't get through the gate unnoticed, it detracts from your percentage, and you miss out on a pretty decent item. Then, head for the gate to Kilika Woods.

You can practise this mini-game until you feel confident. If you don't make it, reset the game and try again. Once you're through, go get your item, and head for the woods to trigger a short scene. You'll end up in the woods. Go investigate the barricades on each of the main paths for a little scene on each. Then head back to the main crossroads. On the left-hand path, look around at the forest wall between the two north-running paths. You should trigger a short scene, and you'll get to the next area.

Go up the steps to get a new mission. There is a save sphere inside the temple on the right. Go into the Cloister of Trials, and take the elevator down. Follow the path along, and take out the Daeva. Watch the short scene. You'll then see a doorway with blue flame blocking it – touch the flame and another Daeva will attack. Defeat it, and the blue flame will be gone. Go through the doorway.

There are three blue flames in the next room – vanquish them in order: Right, left, then middle. Enter the next room, take out the two Daevas in there and continue on down the stairs. There's a dressphere on the floor in here.

Grab it, and head up the next sets of stairs for a boss battle. It shouldn't pose much of a challenge. Just remember to heal. MISSION COMPLETE! You'll be back onboard the Celsius.

PART 2

Check back next month when we'll take you through the second half of this monster RPG. We might even tell you how to beat the final boss.

Is there anything Patch Adams fans won't do?



ギップル：面喰はじめっぞ、かかってこいよ！



WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

THE SECOND TO LAST THING
THAT'LL GO THROUGH YOUR MIND



PlayStation 2



TO BE THE BEST, YOU'VE GOT TO BEAT THE BEST

UNDERESTIMATE THIS ENEMY AT YOUR PERIL. THEY WILL WORK AS A UNIT TO TAKE YOU DOWN. FORTUNATELY, YOU HAVE TWO NEW COMBAT TECHNIQUES TO DEFEND YOURSELF WITH. THE 'OFFENSIVE COVER SYSTEM' ALLOWS YOU TO SHAPE YOUR BODY TO THE ENVIRONMENT, GIVING YOU VITAL PROTECTION. USING 'BLINDFIRE' YOU CAN LAY DOWN SUPPRESSING FIRE WITHOUT LEAVING YOUR COVER POSITION. UNFORTUNATELY, SO CAN THE ENEMY.

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fun,
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PlayStation 2

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.

92 | PlayStation 2 | MAY | 2004

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PIN	GAME	CHEAT
19181	Prince of Persia	Level Select
21211	Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter	Unlimited Ammunition
21212	Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter	Invincibility
21213	Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter	Level Select
20174	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Gimli
20171	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Aragorn
20172	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Frodo
20181	LOTR: The Return of the King	Perfect Mode
20173	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Gandalf
20176	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Sam
20182	LOTR: The Return of the King	Restore Health
20180	LOTR: The Return of the King	Invulnerable
20178	LOTR: The Return of the King	Infinite Missiles
20178	LOTR: The Return of the King	Always Devastating
20177	LOTR: The Return of the King	All Upgrades
20175	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Legolas
15812	Dead to Rights	All Disarms Open
15813	Dead to Rights	Endless Armour
15815	Dead to Rights	Level Select
15816	Dead to Rights	Invincibility
15811	Dead to Rights	10,000 Bullets
07892	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Level Select
07891	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Invincibility
07893	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	All Weapons
07894	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Full Beam
07895	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Full Hornet
07133	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	McLaren F1
07135	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Ferrari F550
07132	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	HSV Coupe GTS
07131	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	BMW Z8
07134	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Ferrari F50
18976	Simpsons Hit & Run	Night Time Mode
18975	Simpsons Hit & Run	Blow up Vehicles In one Hit
18974	Simpsons Hit & Run	Jumping Car
18973	Simpsons Hit & Run	Faster Cars
18972	Simpsons Hit & Run	Infinite Car Health
18971	Simpsons Hit & Run	All Reward Cars
11812	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	All Special Features
11813	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Invincibility
11811	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Level Select
12271	Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness	Level Skip
18481	Tony Hawk's Underground	Faster Speed
18485	Tony Hawk's Underground	Unlocks All Thug Movies
18484	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Rail Balance
18483	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Manuals
18482	Tony Hawk's Underground	Moon Gravity
85421	Sims: Bustin' Out	Genome cheat
85422	Sims: Bustin' Out	All locations
85423	Sims: Bustin' Out	All objects
85424	Sims: Bustin' Out	All skins
85425	Sims: Bustin' Out	Money
12863	X-Men 2: Wolverine's Revenge	Cheat Menu
12861	X-Men 2: Wolverine's Revenge	Level Select
12864	X-Men 2: Wolverine's Revenge	Cerebro Files
12862	X-Men 2: Wolverine's Revenge	All Costumes
12201	Ty The Tasmanian Tiger	Show All Items
12202	Ty The Tasmanian Tiger	Unlock all Technoraniums
07672	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Better Damage
07671	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Realistic Handling
12132	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Drivers
12131	World of Outlaws SprintCars	Money
12133	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Tracks
01393	World Rally Championship	Overhead View
01394	World Rally Championship	Underwater Graphics
01392	World Rally Championship	No Chassis
01391	World Rally Championship	Greater Power
09345	WRC 2 Extreme	Bouncing Cars
09343	WRC 2 Extreme	Overhead View
09342	WRC 2 Extreme	Turbo Mode
09341	WRC 2 Extreme	Master Code
15087	The Hulk	Double Health for Hulk
15088	The Hulk	Half Enemies HP
15085	The Hulk	Unlimited Continues
15086	The Hulk	Double Health for Enemies
15083	The Hulk	Level Select
15082	The Hulk	Invincibility
15081	The Hulk	Play as Grey Hulk
15084	The Hulk	Regenerator
02881	Stuntman	All Cars
02883	Stuntman	All Filmography
02882	Stuntman	All Toys
07952	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Infinite Health
07953	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Unlock All Movies
07954	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Unlock All Blockbusters
07951	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Infinite Super Power
06797	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Bonus Stage
06795	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Recover Health
06796	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Hidden Mission
06791	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	All Characters
06794	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Increase Items
06793	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Unlock All Items
06792	Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	All Missions
18731	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Unlock Max Ammo
18732	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Bullet Shield Mode
18730	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Hidden All Levels
18734	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Silver Bullet Mode
18733	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Sniper Mode
06848	Medal of Honor: Frontline	Snipe A-Rama
06845	Medal of Honor: Frontline	Photon Torpedoes

gamestation

Your definitive guide to the ever-expanding library of PlayStation 2 games

So you've just bought a PlayStation 2, and you're immediately confronted by a dauntingly huge line-up of games to choose from at your local gaming store. Now what?

GameStation is *OPS2*'s one-stop guide to getting an idea of what's hot and what's not. As time goes on and new games come out, we drop some of the older games that don't warrant being remembered, replacing them with newer games that score well in the reviews section.

As PlayStation 2 owners we really are spoiled for choice. There is a massive choice of AAA quality games – many of which are bound to find their way under your radar. *OPS2* is here to make sure that not too many of them manage to slip through your fingers.

If you just want to find the best of the best, look for the games that receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Enjoy your search!

GLOSSARY

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the latest and most up-to-date information but don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been around since the Atari 2600 by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.
AI: Artificial Intelligence.
Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.
Boards: Snowboarders or games featuring the alpine sport.
Coin-op: Coin-operated arcade videogames.
Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame (also 'FMV').
CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.
Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.
D-pad: Direction pad on PS2 controller.
Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.
Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).
ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.
E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).
Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.
FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg *Quake III*).
Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.

High res: High resolution graphics.
HUD: Head Up Display. Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc.
Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre, etc.
Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics.
L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.
Mini-games: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.
Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.
PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.
Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.
RPG: Role-playing game.
RTS: Real-time strategy.
R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.
Sims: Simulation.
Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.
USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2.

"If there's a term, word or phrase that's still eating your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here."

HACK - VOL. 1: INFECTION	★ OVERALL 06
An addictive new spin on the RPG genre that takes it into new territory.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
007 NIGHTFIRE	★ OVERALL 08
Aside from the occasionally iffy AI, this has enough variety to make a solid single player game and the multiplayer (see it king-of-the-hill).	BRONZE PlayStation 2
18 WHEELS	OVERALL 06
Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	OVERALL 07
The World Cup version of FIFA 2002 with more pizzazz, nifty effects for star players and a serious challenge at the highest difficulty level, but sadly lacking in game modes.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER	OVERALL 07
Best ace combat yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions. Best with a flight-stick of some kind.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
APL LIVE 2004	OVERALL 06
Plays a better game of footy, but it's not a vast improvement over its predecessor.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	★ OVERALL 08
There's more than enough inline action to keep you impressed and entertained until the next Tony Hawk says, "Buy me, dude!"	BRONZE PlayStation 2
AIRBLADE	★ OVERALL 08
Indicate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs – everything you could want hovering above to be back to the future anyone?	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002	OVERALL 07
An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
AMPLITUDE	★ OVERALL 08
An addictive mixture of reflexes and music timing. Weak graphics but great gameplay.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ARC: THE LAD, TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS	OVERALL 07
It isn't original but Arc: The Lad is a welcome addition to the list of next-generation RPGs.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ARMORED CORE 2	OVERALL 07
Infinitely-reworkable first-person mech shooter. Not for the casual gamer after a quick fix, but perfect for those who love their sims.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ARMY MEN: AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	OVERALL 02
Very odd helicopter game. Hardly surprising from arguably the worst series of games to grace a console.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ARMY MEN: GREEN RAGDOLL	OVERALL 01
On-rail shooter that manages to sink to new depths of soldiering tedium. Avoid at all costs.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	★ OVERALL 08
More of the same, with new tracks, riders, racing modes and plenty of good old fashioned fun.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
AUTO MODELISTA	★ OVERALL 08
The knee-child of cel-shaded graphics and Gran Turismo. Despite its cartoony appearance, this is a fairly serious racing game.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BACKWARD WRESTLING: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME	OVERALL 06
When they titled this brawler Don't Try This At Home – did they mean the game?	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II	OVERALL 07
Worthwhile if you're after a hack 'n' slash with D&D style, but the game shows its age worse than Cher.	BRONZE PlayStation 2

YOUR KEY TO SHORTLIST

GOLD
Only for games that scored the elusive 10/10.

SILVER
Awarded to games with a mighty 9/10.

BRONZE
Given to games that scored an impressive 8/10.

SMALLER LEVELS, FEWER WEAPONS

Games you must play before the sequel runs them. But be quick.



That big, bald bad ass, Agent 47 is about to go on another killing spree with Hitman: Contracts. That means your time is running out to do a little Hitman research before the sequel makes them look like ancient history. The really hardcore types might like to check out the original Hitman on PC but Hitman 2: Silent Assassin is all you really need. The main appeal of Hitman 2 was the variety of ways in which you could tackle an assignment. Do you want to strangle the delivery guy and sneak your guns in with the groceries? How about waiting for him to take a walk on the balcony, then dropping him with the sniper rifle? Grab your copy now or you'll have to put Agent 47 on your case.

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL	★ OVERALL 08
Compelling and original. It manages to cross multiple genres and is bizarre, unique and engaging all at once.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BLOODRAYNE	★ OVERALL 08
BloodRayne is an explosion of sex, action and violence. It's not going to tax your mind but it's so much fun you won't care.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BOMBERMAN KART	OVERALL 07
As much fun as four people can have with fifty bucks. It's worth it just for the original 2D Bomberman.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BUFFY 2: CHAOS BLOODS	OVERALL 07
Full of action and adventure, Chaos Bloods is a worthy addition to the Buffy legacy.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	★ OVERALL 08
An even more intense racing experience than its predecessor. The Fast & the Furious in a video game.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CASTLEVNIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE	★ OVERALL 08
Better whip and dungeon action than Larry Wachowski's last all-nighter at the Heifer Club.	SILVER PlayStation 2
CHAMPIONS OF NOBODIN	★ OVERALL 08
When it doesn't reinvent the Baldur's Gate wheel, it does refine it so that even RPG haters will be charmed.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CLUB FOOTBALL	★ OVERALL 08
The second best soccer game on PS2. Superior to the FIFA games but PES still gives it a thrashing.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4	★ OVERALL 09
One for experts and newbies alike, Colin 4 is a superlative rally sim with a tank full of fun.	SILVER PlayStation 2
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II	★ OVERALL 08
It's not perfect but it improves on its predecessor by a long shot. War may be hell but this certainly isn't.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	OVERALL 07
A fantastic trip down memory lane for old school veterans, but Contra may confuse or confound the contemporary gamer.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CRASH NITRO KART	OVERALL 06
With a little spit and polish, CNK could have been in pole position, but its faults leave it lagging behind.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CRAZY TAXI	★ OVERALL 08
Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
CRICKET 2002	OVERALL 07
Howzat! Not outstanding. Comes close to being great, but fails short due to the inherited flaws of Cricket 2002.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	OVERALL 07
Top twenty disco fun, marred by a flimsy selection of songs. All together now – big fish, little fish, cardboard box.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
DARK CHRONICLE	★ OVERALL 09
If you've finished FFX and need a new fix, look no further. This is top-tier RPG fare, an essential purchase.	SILVER PlayStation 2
DEAD TO RIGHTS	OVERALL 07
Near endless gunplay with hand-to-hand scrapping, backed up with a dark tale. DTR is good, mindless fun.	BRONZE PlayStation 2
DEF JAM VENDETTA	★ OVERALL 08
Some more options would have made this a true champion, but it's still a worthy contender. SmokeDown watch out!	BRONZE PlayStation 2
DEUS EX	★ OVERALL 09
The thinking man's action shooter and genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Suburb.	SILVER PlayStation 2



DEVIL MAY CRY * OVERALL 09
Melting battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 titles yet! **Definitive**

DEVIL MAY CRY 2 * OVERALL 08
Die-hards may cry at the new direction, but there's still enough gorgeous style and firearms in DMC2 to satisfy action junkies.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE * OVERALL 08
Gene warfare and confusing puzzles abound in this bizarre manga adventure.

DOWNHILL DOMINATION * OVERALL 07
Downhill Domination is a fine extreme racer that should appeal to all daredevil freaks.

DOG'S LIFE * OVERALL 07
This canine caper is an inspired look at the adventure genre that will keep you more entertained than a dog four balls.

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE * OVERALL 08
Impressive combat sim that rewards commitment with paced and varied gameplay.

DYNASTY TACTICS 2 * OVERALL 07
Dynasty Tactics 2 is purely one for the more masochistic strategy guru. You know who you are.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS * OVERALL 07
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends is strictly one for the beat-'em-up fans. Just don't call it mindless.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 * OVERALL 07
Dynasty Warriors 4 is an accomplished title, but due to its lack of innovation, it's unlikely to get many pulses racing.

ENDGAME * OVERALL 09
Sets a new standard in the lightgun shooter genre. Innovative, refreshing and most of all, a toner of fun.

ENTER THE MATRIX * OVERALL 07
Despite a painful lack of clever ETM is an enjoyable package for anyone after another dose of Matrix mayhem.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND * OVERALL 08
Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT * OVERALL 06
Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the bin.

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL * OVERALL 08
ESPN NBA Basketball slams dunk the competition with its slick presentation and innovative modes.

ESPN NFL FOOTBALL * OVERALL 09
If this game's quality was put into a local game, the results would be incredible. Until then, go for the stars and stripes.

ESPN NHL HOCKEY * OVERALL 09
A fast flowing game with plenty of depth. A no-brainer for hockey fans but a still a solid game for everyone else.

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES * OVERALL 07
EverQuest Online Adventures offers rewards for the persistent, but it can be a pretty tough slog getting there.

EVIL TWIN * OVERALL 05
Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, so-so animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.

EXTERMINATOR * OVERALL 07
Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.

EXTREME-G 3 * OVERALL 08
A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some inspiration from the Winout series.

EYE TOY: PLAY * OVERALL 08
Forget the fact that it's marketed at casual gamers: give it a try, because when it comes to Eye Toy, seeing is believing.

EYE TOY: GROOVE * OVERALL 06
Groove is a victim of the diversity of its predecessor. The lack of variety offered by this dancing title undoubtedly narrows its appeal.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE * OVERALL 07
At last, an F1 game that makes a priority of excitement and thrills over worthy but dull simulation.

FANTASIAWIS * OVERALL 05
The world's first fireworks game. Not enormous, but of rare and random beauty.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 * OVERALL 07
The best FIFA yet out it's miles behind PES3. It has all the bells and whistles, but the gameplay is still lacking.

FINAL FANTASY X * OVERALL 09
Nothing else needs to be said about this brilliant RPG. A classic Square adventure with next-gen presentation and production.

FINAL FANTASY X-2 * OVERALL 09
FFX-2 is a huge sprawling RPG adventure that is well worth the attention of even the most casual fan.

FORBIDDEN SIREN * OVERALL 09
This game belongs on the shelf of every survival horror buff. Hell - it belongs on every gamer's shelf.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS * OVERALL 09
Slight imperfections are swamped by an utterly addictive and clever game experience. You must play this.

FUTURAMA * OVERALL 08
With a bit more of polish this could have been shinier than Bender's metal ass.

FUR FIGHTERS * OVERALL 08
Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotgun blasts each other to pieces. The toy gunward will never look innocent again.

GHOSTHUNTER * OVERALL 08
It doesn't quite live up to its thrall potential but it's original, scary, exciting and well worth a look.

GHOST RECON * OVERALL 07
A squad-based first person shooter that suffers from a cumbersome interface for ordering troops about, often degenerating into arcade-style run-and-gun gaming.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 * OVERALL 08
The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

GITAROO MAN * OVERALL 08
If you have a PS2 collection, you should definitely have at least one game like this one in there! Check it out.

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA * OVERALL 07
An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 * OVERALL 10
Not quite as good as its neon-soaked, '80s prequel but it's still fantastic fun and can now be found for bargain prices.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY * OVERALL 10
Better than GTA 3 Cars, crooks, cone, and chaos with total freedom to do what you want. Almost here for any gamer-serious or not.

GRAND TURISMO 3: A-SPEC * OVERALL 09
If you don't know already, GT3 is the greatest racing game in the world. Speed down to the store and buy it now.

GRAND TURISMO CONCEPT: 2002 TOKYO-GENEVA * OVERALL 08
A more accessible version of GT3, with concept cars. Perfect for those who just want to race, rather than play mechanic.

GREEDY HOOKS SHOW * OVERALL 08
A truly ghoulish treat for fans of the survival horror genre who fancy something a little different.

GUMBALL 3000 * OVERALL 03
A decidedly cap racing title that fails to deliver on all fronts. Not something to bother with considering how many other decent racers are about.

G-SURFERS * OVERALL 07
Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

GUILTY GEAR X * OVERALL 08
Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

GUNGRAVE * OVERALL 06
Bizarre Manga inspired shooting game with gorgeous visuals, but a distinct lack of depth to back up all that eye candy.

GUN GRIFTON BLAZE * OVERALL 07
A mech shooter for robot obsessive-types everywhere.

HALF-LIFE * OVERALL 09
The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in its definitive form. An essential purchase.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS * OVERALL 08
Simple puzzles and gorgeous graphics make this a winner for younger fans of the books and films.

HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP * OVERALL 07
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup is an entertainingly original title, but lacking in variety and challenge.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN * OVERALL 09
A disturbingly realistic take on living the life of a hired killer. Not one for the squeamish, but it contains brilliant (amni).

HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD * OVERALL 07
It lacks any real uniqueness but looks good and plays well enough to be forgiven.

INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB * OVERALL 07
High adventure 3D platform game let down by some unfortunate technical issues.

ININJA * OVERALL 07
While I-Ninja is packed with varied gameplay, its original elements are largely superfluous. Worth a rent though.

JAK & RENEGADE * OVERALL 10
Darker and more challenging than its predecessor, Jak II is the best platform game we've ever seen!

JAK AND Daxter: THE REBIRTH OF LEGACY * OVERALL 09
A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot that introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING * OVERALL 08
Looks and plays just like the films. Maybe a little too Metal Gear Solid-Lite but it's perfect for com action.

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH * OVERALL 08
A title lightweight but the multiplayer modes and arcade missions keep Dredd out of jail.

JURASSIC PARK: PROJECT GENESIS * OVERALL 07
A prehistoric premise, sure. But Operation Genesis puts a fresh spin on the God sim genre. Hammond would be proud.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO * OVERALL 06
A padded-out training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighters otherwise rather limited nature.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER * OVERALL 08
A bit too slanted to Pro howls for our liking, but still the best surfing game around.

KILLSWITCH * OVERALL 07
As third-person shooters go, it's quite a lot of fun. Just don't go in expecting the next Splinter Cell.

KINGDOM HEARTS * OVERALL 08
A beautifully produced RPG with Disney and Square characters. Don't let the kiddie vibe fool you, this one's very tough.

KLONDAKE 2: LUNAR'S VEIL * OVERALL 06
Cute and cheerful platform featuring the lovable glove-armed blue cat-rabbit hybrid. Fun stuff.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001 * OVERALL 06
A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not a match for Rocky though.

KYL: DARK LINEAGE * OVERALL 07
A well-rounded platforming experience. Missing a few bells and whistles but very respectable fun.

LARGO WINCH * OVERALL 05
Based on a French comic character, this spy game is too linear, and lacks the interactivity that is needed to maintain a game's attention.

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFENSE * OVERALL 08
Legacy of Kain: Defense is a fitting new chapter: Kain, bloody and pretty. Get ready to spill some blood.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING * OVERALL 05
'Violent battle' with a shortage of modes and options. There are much better recreations of Pro wrestling.

LE MANS 24 HOURS * OVERALL 08
Accessible for gamers daunted by sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills.



1. DEVIL MAY CRY 2

The original stands as the most intense action game on PS2 but this didn't have any of its style.

2. LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

It wasn't worse than this prequel but gaming has moved on over the years and Lara hasn't.

3. MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN

Trading skeletons and graveyards for robots and pumpkins just didn't work for the series.

4. GRAND TURISMO CONCEPT

The dumbed-down, toddler Turismo was a huge downer for anyone expecting a proper sequel.

5. SPYHUNTER 2

The first PS2 game could get by on its retro charm but you need something better for the sequel.



LOD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING ★ OVERALL 09
Meaty button-mashing for the masses. Movie-to-game licenses are almost never this good. And it's a two-player, nine-

MACE GREEN: BOUNTY HUNTER ★ OVERALL 08
A type-free, classy Intermesh of different styles makes for one of the most compelling games of the year.

MADDEN NFL 2004 ★ OVERALL 09
Not just for those who already love padding-up, this is a great game, whatever your tastes.

MARFIA ★ OVERALL 07
Mario is a sick title that could have been a classic if the driving sections weren't so dull. Close but no cigar.

MANHUNT ★ OVERALL 08
Manhunt is a solid, enjoyable stealth-'em-up with utterly engaging gameplay. Not one for the kiddies, however.

MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE ★ OVERALL 07
Horrendously long loading times and jerkiness spoil some of the best shootouts gaming has to offer.

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN ★ OVERALL 08
Much more accessible than its prequel, with an even more engaging plot.

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN ★ OVERALL 09
A game? A movie? MOH is a grueling experience that packs the best of both worlds.

METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM ★ OVERALL 08
If you're blowing stuff up then this will do more than whet your appetite for destruction.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY ★ OVERALL 10
A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A security-focused playstyle.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE ★ OVERALL 08
Incredibly comprehensive Metal Gear package for novices but MGS2 owners will struggle to find \$110's worth.

MICROMACHINES ★ OVERALL 08
Nothing particularly 'next-gen' about this installment of the series, but an excellent racing diversion nonetheless.

MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES ★ OVERALL 08
Beer kopper alone is worth the \$40. Trust us, when this beer touches your lips it tastes so good! A must retro collection.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - OPERATION SURMA ★ OVERALL 08
Captures the reality stuff perfectly but ignores the MI staples - car chases and hot chicks!

MOTO GP2 ★ OVERALL 07
A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race mix for facility.

MOTO GP3 ★ OVERALL 07
A little repetitive and far too similar to the last two games. Still, it's the best motorcycle game on the system thus far.

MTX: MOTOTRAX ★ OVERALL 08
Despite a few disappointing features, MTX Mototrax is fun wearing some fluorescent leathers for.

MUSIC 2004 ★ OVERALL 09
A mighty authoritative music title, which works as a fun diversion or a serious tool. Unmissable for wannabe bedroom artists.

MX SUPERPLY 2003: FEAT RICKY CARMICHAEL ★ OVERALL 07
Polished and engaging motocross sim that utilises its subject matter to great effect. An excellent extreme game.

MX UNLEASHED ★ OVERALL 08
A must for petrol heads. Motocross games are heading in the right direction with MX Unleashed.

NBA 2K3 ★ OVERALL 08
Not only realistic, but packed with plenty of features as well, offering a wide selection of game modes.

NBA LIVE 2004 ★ OVERALL 08
Noticeable better than 2003, but how much more can EA cram into their sports games?

NBA STREET VOLUME 2 ★ OVERALL 09
A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

PSONE PLAYA
PSONE games that are still worth the time of day

DIE HARD
The first movie became an overhead shooter as McLane made his way through each terrorist-filled floor of the building.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

With a fourth movie in production we may even see Die Hard Quadrilogy on PS2 soon, but until then the original is still more than worthy of your attention. Broken up into three separate adventures, Die Hard Trilogy took on a different genre for each of the three flicks. The first movie became an overhead shooter as McLane made his way through each terrorist-filled floor of the building. The second game became a light-gun shooter set in the airport, and the third was turned into a Crazy Taxi-style car chase. The second and third portions of the game were only average but the first movie was captured brilliantly in the intense shooter. There was even a Die Hard Trilogy 2 released on PSone but it's better not to talk about that one. Yippy Kal Yai mother lovers!

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2 ★ OVERALL 08
A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND ★ OVERALL 09
Sexy, in A1, nicks give like a greased rat up a drain pipe, ground shaking stereo, no previous owners. It's a steal!

NFL 2K3 ★ OVERALL 09
This is the game to own for anyone into American football thanks to its ultra-realistic graphics and controls.

NFL STREET ★ OVERALL 08
Forget street cricket, NFL Street is so fun that it'll have kids playing it on the streets, yelling "too long".

NHL 2K3 ★ OVERALL 08
Excellent simulation settings for the die-hard fans, and plenty of arcade thrills for the rest of us.

NHL 2004 ★ OVERALL 07
PS2's finest NHL comp. You'll enjoy this even if you think Wayne Gretzky is some kind of Polish Soap.

NIGHTSHADE ★ OVERALL 07
Another hard and fast does of ninja action. It's perfect for anyone who's followed Shinobi from way back when.

ONI ★ OVERALL 07
New character animation in an enjoyable 3rd person sci-fi romp.

ONIMUSHA: WARRIORS ★ OVERALL 08
Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run out. Does suffer from an ill PAL conversion though.

OPERATION WINBACK ★ OVERALL 08
Lacks variety, but still an enjoyable stealth shooter, nevertheless.

ORPHEN ★ OVERALL 04
A disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG.

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2 ★ OVERALL 07
Rhythm action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY ★ OVERALL 05
Based on the race of the same name, this sim does little to inspire interest.

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION ★ OVERALL 07
It's not going to dethrone any of the current champions in the genre, but it's good chilled-out fun for a while.

POLICE 347 ★ OVERALL 05
Basic cop-shoot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-

PRIDE FC ★ OVERALL 08
The new king of the ring! Pride FC is the most realistic fighting simulation available on any system to date. Great stuff!

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME ★ OVERALL 09
Prince! More like the king! Ubi Soft has crafted one of the greatest PS2 adventure titles yet!

PRISONER OF WAR ★ OVERALL 07
Escaping from POW camps is all well and good, but you remain a prisoner of often rigid game objectives. Even so, this is a bold, compelling, adventure game.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 ★ OVERALL 09
If you know who Kewell is you must own this. The best soccer sports and multiplayer game on the PS2.

PROJECT EDEN ★ OVERALL 08
Look beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose weeks to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure.

QUAKE III ★ OVERALL 09
In four-player, this FPS is solid multiplayer fun. A technical tour de force, it runs smoothly and looks absolutely glorious.

RATCHET & CLANK ★ OVERALL 08
Pure platforming bliss from the company behind the original Spyro the Dragon titles on the PSone.

RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED ★ OVERALL 09
Everything you could want in a sequel. It plays brilliantly and though it lacks innovation it's still a real charmer.

RAIMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC ★ OVERALL 07
Rayman offers plenty of 'amess fun but he's no match for Ratchets or Rocoons.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 ★ OVERALL 07
A marvelous, arcade-based comedy game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other.

RED FACTION ★ OVERALL 08
Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Duke III.

RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA X ★ OVERALL 09
A captivating story, cinematic atmosphere, kinetic action, frights, thrills and copious amounts of blood-letting.

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN ★ OVERALL 08
Only the high standards of the FPS competition prevent this from being a truly essential buy.

BE2 ★ OVERALL 08
Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay. Unique, and refreshing.

RIDGE RACER V ★ OVERALL 07
A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality.

RISE TO HONOUR ★ OVERALL 07
This is as close as you can get to being Jet Li without spending a decade in a Shao Lin temple.

ROBOTEC: BATTELCRY ★ OVERALL 07
A cell-shaded shooter that brings the classic anime to life, but is held back by a decidedly clunky control system.

ROCKY ★ OVERALL 08
The best boxing title available for PS2. Has a great story mode that takes the player through the movies.

RUGBY 2004 ★ OVERALL 07
Covers the entirety of the sport well but fails to capture the true feel of it.

RUGBY LEAGUE ★ OVERALL 08
An entertaining game which neglected NFL fans can finally enjoy. Long-awaited, but very satisfying!

RUN LIKE HELL ★ OVERALL 07
A refreshing sci-fi survival horror title with a host of famous names handling the voice acting.

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE ★ OVERALL 07
This would make a fine and worthy addition to any action fans game collection. Brevity is the only pain.

SALT LAKE 2002 ★ OVERALL 03
Soulless Winter Olympics game. Decent weather effects but the majority of events are rather tedious.

SHADOW OF MEMORIES ★ OVERALL 08
Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot.

SHINOBI ★ OVERALL 08
Shinobi is the kind of frantic, shallow, old school arcade game you don't see enough of anymore. A fast and bloody good time.

SILENT HILL 2 ★ OVERALL 09
One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled into one game.

SILENT HILL 3 ★ OVERALL 09
The nastiest game on PlayStation 2 - we dare you to try it.

SILENT SCOPE 2 ★ OVERALL 07
A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET ★ OVERALL 03
Ridiculous top-down shooter. No-one bought a PS2 for games like this.

SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2002 ★ OVERALL 05
Adapt loopy management sim, but lacks the killer goal.

SKY ODYSSEY ★ OVERALL 08
A flight sim where you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.



SLED STORM OVERALL 06
A mazed-out, splashy remake of the PSone racing classic, very much in the SSX mould.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT OVERALL 07
Deep & stylish this game suffers from disproportionate leaps in difficulty that can be off-putting.

SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES OVERALL 07
Im impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS ★ OVERALL 08
Finally! This is it! The online game we've all been waiting for!

SONIC HEROES OVERALL 07
Sonic Heroes is a solid platformer that pays homage to its classic routes but the hedgehog has failed to evolve...

SOUL CALIBUR 2 ★ OVERALL 30
Finely crafted gameplay, stunning visuals and a high level of polish make SOUL an essential purchase.

SPIDER-MAN OVERALL 07
It doesn't display huge innovations over its PSone counterpart, although it's a solid and enjoyable Spidey title either way.

SPINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY OVERALL 07
If you're sick of characters copping on and on in cut-scenes then this will be right up your alley.

SSX 3 ★ OVERALL 09
Delivers an avalanche of adrenalin rushing action, unlike any other snowboarding title out there.

STARSKY & HUTCH OVERALL 07
Given the lack of gameplay variety this cop caper shouldn't be as consistently enjoyable as it is.

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER OVERALL 07
Gorgeous to look at, taking the gamer into the Star Wars universe, but is let down by repetitive gameplay.

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS OVERALL 07
One for the Star Wars collectors, and a great battlefield in its own right. Shallow but still worth investigation.

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER ★ OVERALL 09
Messmerising 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. Great fun.

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING OVERALL 05
Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.

STATE OF EMERGENCY OVERALL 06
A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot.

STREET FIGHTER EX3 OVERALL 06
A decent enough 2D/3D fighting game, but is missing the series to death. There are better 2D fighters from the same company.

STREET HOOPS OVERALL 06
More about collecting fancy duds than having a decent game of basketball, which is why this hoops title misses from the line.

STUNTMAN ★ OVERALL 08
Won't have the wide appeal of the Driver games due to its difficulty, but it's an ingenious concept that thrills and entertains.

SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL OVERALL 07
The best beach at beach volleyball we've seen, but nothing to really set your gaming soul on fire.

SUMMONER 2 ★ OVERALL 06
Follow-up to the RPG launch title. More action orientated than the original, but still an epic adventure for fans of fantasy.

SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE OVERALL 04
A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI OVERALL 07
Sword of the Samurai is a slow, ponderous, but intelligent game that combines strategy with gore.

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT ★ OVERALL 08
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves make it a worthwhile purchase.

TEKKEN 4 ★ OVERALL 09
Continuing the tradition of fighting game excellence. The first Tekken game to include free-movement.

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN ★ OVERALL 06
An infusion of ninja style and killer gameplay across nine sumptuous levels. A great return to form for a classic title.

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES OVERALL 06
Like Arnie, this game is a likeable dinosaur. Big guns and explosions but less-generation gameplay.

THE GETAWAY ★ OVERALL 09
Sony's answer to Grand Theft Auto, with a decidedly darker and nastier storyline. Offers an amazing life-like replica of London.

THE HOBBIT OVERALL 07
The Hobbit is a game devoid of challenge and originality, and strictly for the younger Tolkien fans.

THE HULK OVERALL 07
Not a smash-hit, but not damaged goods either. An enjoyable beat 'em up; shame about those stealth sections though.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN ★ OVERALL 08
Continue the show's best elements with the best of GTA and you've got an instant, charming winner.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE OVERALL 06
It's Crazy Taxi but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT ★ OVERALL 08
Bustin' Out is slicker than the last game but without enough gameplay enhancements to make it essential.

THE TUNING ★ OVERALL 08
Not only does it do justice to the classic horror film, but also introduces fear and trust issues to the survival-horror genre.

THE WEAKEST LINK OVERALL 04
You'll get more enjoyment playing along with the show than you will from putting up with the viper-tongued host.

THEME PARK WORLD OVERALL 07
Take on the role of a theme park tycoon for a day in this engaging god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those turnstiles a-spin is your prime directive.

THIS IS SOCCER 2004 OVERALL 07
The pros abound: the cons but the cons are annoying. TIS is not as good as Pro Evo 3, but it's certainly closing in.

THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX OVERALL 07
A brave attempt to blend arcade and sim with choppers.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 ★ OVERALL 08
The best golf game on PS2, but we're holding our breath for next year's online version.

TIME CRISIS 3 ★ OVERALL 08
Action-packed arcade bullet-fest with plenty of lure for the casual player. Very similar to Time Crisis 2 though.

TIMESPLITTERS 2 ★ OVERALL 10
Takes the multiplayer from TimeSplitters and adds heaps of options. Major visual upgrades.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM ★ OVERALL 06
If it's a dogger-prowl tactical shooter, Jungle Storm is an absolute bargain. Spend the savings on face paint.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3 OVERALL 07
It falls short of being brilliant, if only it had gone that extra mile. Fingers crossed for next time.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLITTER CELL ★ OVERALL 10
Move over Snake, Sam's the new special agent in town. Splitter Cell is an innovative game with some very cool touches.

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS ★ OVERALL 08
A little on the slow side but there's no doubting Lara's appeal. The original superstar is back!

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA ★ OVERALL 06
A solid shooter that takes GTA's ideas and improves many of them, but loses something along the way.

TUROK: EVOLUTION OVERALL 06
Boasts a wicked line-up of weapons and a variety of gaming styles, but suffers from crappy AI and frame rate issues.

TWIN CALIBER OVERALL 03
One of the shoddiest shooters around. Takes an interesting twin-stick gaming concept and ruins it with slow gameplay, chronic control issues.

TWISTED METAL: BLACK ★ OVERALL 06
This is everything that you'd expect a Twisted Metal game to be on PS2 - and then some.

UNLIMITED SAGA OVERALL 07
If you've never played a Sogo game, this will be unfamiliar and unspectacular but very challenging.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT ★ OVERALL 08
Totally over the top first-person shooter. Makes for a nice alternative to Quake III, but is outclassed totally by TimeSplitters 2.

URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER OVERALL 07
UFS is not worth pulling your shirt over your head for, but given a chance it's worth a run.

V-RALLY 3 ★ OVERALL 08
Not as instantly playable as WRC II Extreme or Colin McRae Rally 3, but effort pays off with some very solid racing.

V8 SUPERCAR RACE DRIVER OVERALL 05
Real damage. Real V8s. Real Aussie tracks. Real fun. The best racing game seen so far on the PlayStation 2.

VICTORIOUS BOXERS OVERALL 04
Offbeat Japanese boxing title that lacks the killer punch. Pointless to track down while games such as Rocky are about.

VAMPIRE NIGHT ★ OVERALL 08
A vampire-blasting light gun extravaganza that looks great but has questionable replay value once the bad boys are all put to rest.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION ★ OVERALL 06
Packed with things to do, V4 still lacks the outright fun that makes Soul Calibur a name for everyone.

VIRTUA TENNIS 2 ★ OVERALL 08
Far and away the best Tennis simulation to grace the PS2. The World Circuit mode provides an awesome long term challenge.

WAKEDREAMING UNLEASHED ★ OVERALL 08
It may be a little wet behind the ears but Unleashed has just as many thrills as its extreme brothers.

WAR OF THE MONSTERS OVERALL 07
War of the Monsters is a big, trash game that explodes with charm and burns brightly, but not for very long.

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR OVERALL 07
A decent FPS with good controls and an interesting story but it doesn't bring anything new to the tabletop.

WHIPSLASH OVERALL 07
A great sense of humour and warped characters save Whiplash from obscurity as a platformer.

WIPEOUT FUSION ★ OVERALL 09
Style and substance are here in the most fully realised Wipeout yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it gets.

WORMS 3D OVERALL 07
Drooling Worms fanatics - you know who you are - will grab this in a flash but anyone who drinks their tequila without the little wriggly guys will want to wait for Worms 3D.

WRC 3 ★ OVERALL 09
An improvement over its esteemed predecessor, WRC 3 races neck and neck with McRae 04 for rally glory.

WWE SMACKDOWN: HERE COMES THE PAIN! ★ OVERALL 09
The best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever shall be... until the next SmackDown!

X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE ★ OVERALL 08
A quality action adventure that blends stealth with hand-to-hand combat. Only a few irritations dross it a higher score.



TOP 5

1. RING OUT

Knocking someone out of the ring may be cheaper than No Rills noodles on sale, but it's a great way to turn a fight around.

2. PERFECT

Get in late and keep pounding away. It works in Soul Calibur as well as pornos.

3. TIME OUT

If your life bar is bigger than theirs, backing off and waiting for the time limit is a great tactic.

4. COMEBACK KID

When you've only got a ring of health left off opponent will become sloppy. Rush in and teach them a lesson.

5. THROW IT IN

The only thing cheaper than a ring out is going for cheap throws when your opponent blocks.

INSIDE GAMING

OPS2 sneaks into the Hollywood gaming studios for the inside scoop on Jak & Daxter

OPS2: How did your experience with the *Jak & Daxter* games compare to your earlier work?

Jak: Let's get one thing straight. They're not the "Jak & Daxter" games. I'm the star of the series! He's just my sidekick! They lumped me with the over-acting rodent in the first game to make me more accessible to the ladies. Not that I need any help in that department. I tried to get the stupid squirrel dropped from the second game but his lawyer was too smart. Oh well, at least I was able to get them to drop his name for the sequel - *Jak II: Renegade*.

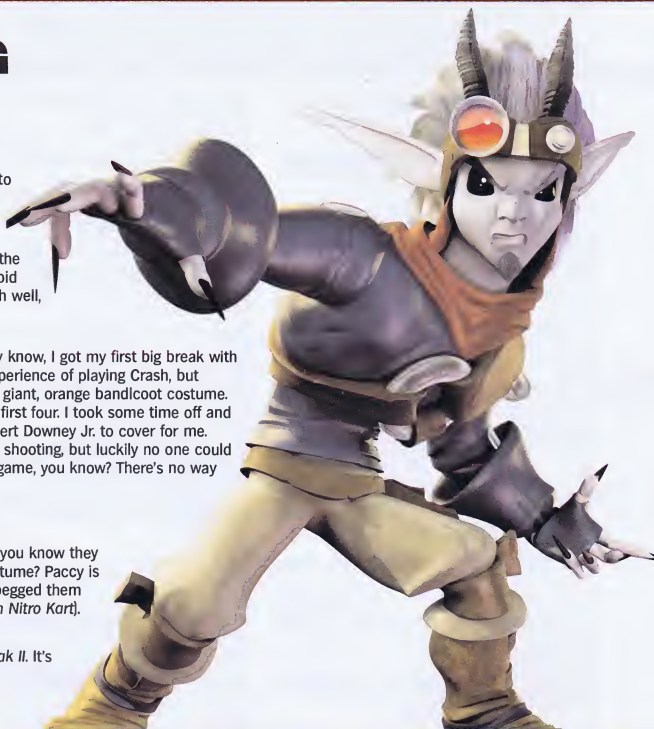
As for my career, it's just gone from strength to strength. As you probably know, I got my first big break with the lead role in the *Crash Bandicoot* games. I'm really grateful for the experience of playing Crash, but there's only so much emotion you can get across while you're wearing a giant, orange bandicoot costume. Most people think I did all five *Crash* games on PSone but I only did the first four. I took some time off and did a little theatre work during the shooting of *Crash Bash*. They got Robert Downey Jr. to cover for me. That guy was totally whacked out of his head and hungover every day of shooting, but luckily no one could tell under the costume. It wasn't a coincidence *Crash Bash* was a party game, you know? There's no way Downey could have handled a real sequel.

OPS2: What do you think of the PS2 *Crash* games?

Jak: I don't think the casting was great. I've got no idea why they picked Pac-Man. The guy is pushing 50 and he sure isn't getting any lighter. Did you know they had to wrap three girdles around him just to get his fat arse into the costume? Pacey is so out of shape he almost had a heart attack during the first game. He begged them for months to let him use his motorised wheelchair for the sequel (*Crash Nitro Kart*).

OPS2: Anything you'd like to say to the fans?

Jak: I'd like to thank everyone for being so supportive of my goatee in *Jak II*. It's given me the courage to go for a full beard in *Jak III*.



SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN

Tough enough to make Solid Snake shake? You bet!

FIRST REVIEW



NEXT MONTH

SPIDER-MAN 2

Exclusive info on the upcoming game and movie!

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

Bend time back again with this killer sequel!

10 NEW DEMOS

Play *Transformers*, *Fight Night 2004*, *Rise to Honour* and more!



JUNE ISSUE

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